

2009

# A performer's analysis of Isang Yun's Monolog for bassoon with an emphasis on the role of traditional Korean influences

Laura Hauser

*Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, laurahauser04@yahoo.com*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool\\_dissertations](https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_dissertations)



Part of the [Music Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Hauser, Laura, "A performer's analysis of Isang Yun's Monolog for bassoon with an emphasis on the role of traditional Korean influences" (2009). *LSU Doctoral Dissertations*. 3011.

[https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool\\_dissertations/3011](https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_dissertations/3011)

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at LSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in LSU Doctoral Dissertations by an authorized graduate school editor of LSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [gradetd@lsu.edu](mailto:gradetd@lsu.edu).

A PERFORMER'S ANALYSIS OF ISANG YUN'S *MONOLOG FOR BASSOON*  
WITH AN EMPHASIS ON THE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL KOREAN INFLUENCES

A Monograph

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Musical Arts

in

The School of Music

by

Laura Hauser  
B.M., Eastman School of Music, 2000  
M.M., Michigan State University, 2002  
December 2009

©Copyright 2009  
Laura Hauser  
All rights reserved

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

There are several people that deserve to be acknowledged for their help in bringing this document to completion. I would like to thank Gabriel Beavers for all the time and energy he spent on this paper. I greatly appreciate all of his comments, and patience, and I am thankful to have gone through this process with him. Thanks also to the members of my committee, especially Dr. Griffin Campbell, for their insight, suggestions, and time.

To my wonderful husband, I could not have done this without you. Your time, advice, support, and love have been invaluable through this process. And to my two boys, Evan and Seth, thank you for your patience and understanding while mommy gets her work done.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
LIST OF TABLES.....	v
LIST OF EXAMPLES.....	vi
ABSTRACT.....	vii
CHAPTER	
ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
TWO: BIOGRAPHY.....	3
THREE: EUROPEAN INFLUENCES.....	14
FOUR: RELIGIOUS INFLUENCES.....	20
FIVE: TRADITIONAL KOREAN INFLUENCES.....	27
SIX: <i>MONOLOG FOR BASSOON</i> : ORIGIN AND ANALYSIS.....	38
Origin.....	38
Yun's Hauptton Technique.....	43
<i>Monolog for bassoon</i> : An Overview.....	45
Ornamentation.....	50
Hauptton Analysis.....	53
Yin and Yang in Yun's <i>Monolog for bassoon</i> .....	56
Conclusion.....	58
REFERENCE LIST.....	60
APPENDIX	
A MUSICAL REALIZATION OF HAUPTTON ANALYSIS.....	62
B LETTER OF PERMISSION.....	64
VITA.....	65

## LIST OF TABLES

6.1	Comparison of Musical Material.....	41
6.2	Comparison of Identical and Transposed Material.....	42
6.3	Rhythmic Discrepancies.....	43
6.4	Hauptton Chart.....	46
6.5	Symmetrical Yin and Yang Analysis.....	58

## LIST OF EXAMPLES

6.1	Measures 5-8.....	44
6.2	Measures 34-36.....	45
6.3	Measures 1-3.....	45
6.4	Measure 39.....	47
6.5	Measures 92-93.....	50
6.6	Measures 14-16.....	51
6.7	Measure 18.....	51
6.8	Measures 74-75.....	52
6.9	Measures 46-51.....	52
6.10	Measure 73.....	53
6.11	Measures 53-54.....	53

## ABSTRACT

Korean born Isang Yun (1917-1995) was a highly successful composer of Western avant-garde music who infused traditional Korean elements in works composed in a Western musical context. This monograph discusses the use of traditional Korean musical style and performance practices in Isang Yun's *Monolog for bassoon*, his only solo work for this instrument. Yun draws on a wide variety of East Asian elements for inspiration; from traditional Korean musical stylistic components, genres, and instruments, to Taoist and Buddhist religious philosophy. The *Monolog for bassoon* exemplifies Yun's application of East Asian elements in his compositions and is a work growing in popularity with performers. However, it has been overlooked for scholarly analysis. This monograph provides pertinent biographical information about Yun's life and musical experiences, an examination of European, religious, and traditional Korean compositional influences, the origin of the *Monolog for bassoon*, and an in-depth analysis of the work. The analysis focuses on the application of Yun's signature *hauptton* technique, and how it shapes Yun's synthesis of Korean elements in a piece that, at first hearing, appears to be a typical Western avant-garde work. Specific examples from the *Monolog for bassoon* are provided and discussed in terms of interpretation and relationship to their Korean inspiration.



## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Isang Yun (1917-1995) was a Korean nationalist who infused elements of traditional Korean musical practices in works composed in a Western musical context. While strictly utilizing Western instruments and compositional formats, Yun drew significant inspiration from ideals of Korean sound, traditional Korean instruments and musical genres, and the East Asian religions of Buddhism and Taoism. Yun has freely admitted and explained his sources of inspiration: “I did not simply make a kind of Chinese-Korean folklore with Western technique, I worked both spiritually. I worked with Western technique, but behind that was always East Asian sound imagination.”<sup>1</sup>

The *Monolog for bassoon* was composed in 1983, during the middle years of Yun’s mature compositional career. At this point in his life, Yun had long ago mastered the formal techniques of the European avant-garde and had shifted into composing within a more free atonal style. The *Monolog for bassoon* is typical of Yun’s mature style in that he combines the use of free atonality with elements from his Korean heritage.

While Isang Yun was recognized by the South Korean government only after his death for his contributions to art music and society, his compositions have been widely performed and highly regarded throughout German-speaking countries for the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Yun’s works have been steadily growing in popularity and influence over the last two decades throughout the world.

The *Monolog for bassoon*, which has recently been recorded by no fewer than five prominent bassoonists, is testament to Yun’s growing prominence as a 20<sup>th</sup> century composer. It

---

<sup>1</sup> Jiyeon Byeon, “*The Wounded Dragon: An Annotated Translation of Der verwundete Drache, the Biography of Composer Isang Yun, by Luise Rinser and Isang Yun*” (PhD diss., Kent State University, 2003), 124.

exemplifies Yun's unique compositional angle, combining traditional Korean inspirations in a work for bassoon, a distinctly Western instrument. The *Monolog for bassoon* warrants close study, as it is his only solo work for bassoon, and is an emerging standard of 20<sup>th</sup> century avant-garde bassoon repertoire.

The layout of the subsequent chapters of this monograph is as follows: Chapter Two will provide specific biographical information about Yun's life. This will include his Korean upbringing, early musical study, political encounters in both Korea and Europe, and Yun's major musical awards and achievements. The next three chapters will discuss the major compositional influences that have impacted Yun and the writing of the *Monolog for bassoon*. Chapter Three: *European Influences* will discuss Yun's European musical training, how he became known as a composer in Europe, as well as how his signature compositional style emerged. Chapter Four: *Religious Influences* will explore how Yun incorporates elements and ideals from Buddhism and Taoism. Chapter Five: *Traditional Korean Influences* will discuss how Yun incorporates traditional Korean sound concepts and instrumental techniques into his compositions. Chapter Six: *Monolog for bassoon Origin and Analysis* will contain background information on the work, as well as a detailed analysis of the *Monolog for bassoon* with an emphasis on how Yun incorporates musical ideals and philosophies from his Korean heritage.

## CHAPTER TWO: BIOGRAPHY

Isang Yun was born September 17, 1917 in the Korean seaport village of Tongyong, an area now known as Ch'ungmu in South Korea.<sup>2</sup> The Yun family migrated to Korea from China thirty-seven generations prior to the birth of Isang. As with many traditional Korean families, the Yuns strongly identified with their Chinese lineage and strove to maintain this heritage. The Chinese character “Yun” means leader or guide and “sang” translates to mulberry tree. Isang Yun explains, “As Yun means leader, my name, which should actually be inverted, Yun I-sang, means the leader, on or under, or by the mulberry tree.”<sup>3</sup> The name Isang Yun was given was particularly significant to his father, Yun Ki-Hyon, a poet, philosopher, and an expert in Chinese literature and history. It is a reference to the story of I-Yun, an influential philosopher turned politician who lived under a mulberry tree and was credited with establishing the silk industry during the Chinese Yin period.<sup>4</sup>

Yun's upbringing was surrounded by political and social unrest. Growing up in Korea during the Japanese occupation (1905-1945), his father emphasized Korean as well as Chinese traditions and philosophies (from which much of Korean culture historically stems) in a deliberate effort to make Isang identify with traditional Korean culture as opposed to the Japanese culture that had been forced upon Korean society. While Yun's father never publicly admitted to being anti-Japanese, his feelings were clear. As he refused to do business with the

---

<sup>2</sup> Andrew McCredie, “Isang Yun” in *Music of the Twentieth-Century Avant-Garde: A Biocritical Sourcebook*, ed. Larry Sitsky (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2002), 586.

<sup>3</sup> Jiyeon Byeon, “*The Wounded Dragon: An Annotated Translation of Der verwundete Drache*, the Biography of Composer Isang Yun, by Luise Rinser and Isang Yun” (PhD diss., Kent State University, 2003), 37.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 38-39.

Japanese the family grew poorer and their influence diminished, an obvious and uncomfortable truth to Yun even as a child.<sup>5</sup>

Yun began schooling at the age of five. For three years he attended a private Chinese school where he learned subjects deemed of the utmost importance to his father, traditional Chinese handwriting, literature, and philosophy, but not music.<sup>6</sup> It was not until the age of eight that Yun attended a European-style elementary school and had his first formal experiences with music.

At the age of thirteen Yun began composing. Recalling this time in his life Yun said, "...when I was thirteen years old, I thought, 'why should I sing and play only what others have written down in notes? Why should I myself not write my own music?' So I began to compose, at first simple songs, then somewhat more complicated music for some instruments with harmony as I imagined it. It was, I should say, highly styled light music. And it was performed!"<sup>7</sup> These early compositions by Yun were performed during the intermissions between silent movies. Though he remained anonymous as the composer, the thrill of hearing his works in public performance motivated Yun to continue to compose and study music.

In his late teens and early twenties Yun pursued musical studies in Seoul, Osaka, and Tokyo, returning home to Korea shortly before the commencement of World War II.<sup>8</sup> He became part of an underground resistance organization against the Japanese occupation. In 1943 Japanese authorities arrested Yun, ironically not for his rebellious activities and secret weapons production, but for nationalistic Korean music he had composed which the Japanese had

---

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>8</sup> Harold Kunz, "Isang Yun," *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/30747> (accessed December 14, 2008).

forbidden.<sup>9</sup> The Japanese authorities imprisoned and tortured Yun for two months in hopes he would admit to the underground activities of which they suspected him, but had no evidence. While the Japanese closely watched Yun after his release, it did not stop him from again organizing a dissident group. When a former student of Yun's, now working for the local police, warned him of his imminent arrest, he managed to escape the authorities, fleeing with his cello to Seoul where he lived in hiding under a false identity. After falling ill with tuberculosis he was forced to remain in the hospital until the end of the War.<sup>10</sup> Once well, Yun became director of an orphanage in Pusan (1946-47), and later a music teacher in Tongyeong. He was teaching music at the university in Pusan when he met and married his wife, Su-Ja Lee, in 1950, several months before the Korean War began.<sup>11</sup>

Yun's first major recognition as a composer was in 1955 when he was honored with the Seoul City Culture Award for his first string quartet and Piano Trio.<sup>12</sup> This award was considered to be Korea's highest cultural honor and was the first time it had ever been presented to a composer.<sup>13</sup> Yun felt that in order for him to advance as a composer he needed to study in Europe, and the Seoul City Culture Award made this aspiration possible. Though he desired to study in Germany to learn the various modern atonal techniques of the Second Viennese School, he had no connections there to recommend him for a visa to facilitate his studies. He did, however, have a Korean friend in Paris who was able to assist him by connecting him with the Paris Conservatory.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Byeon, "*Wounded Dragon*," 78.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 82-85.

<sup>11</sup> McCredie, *Twentieth-century Avant-garde*, 586.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Byeon, "*Wounded Dragon*," 99.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 100.

In 1956 Yun, leaving his wife and two children in Korea, ventured to Europe and commenced studies at the Paris Conservatory.<sup>15</sup> After just one year in Paris he left and went to Berlin and attended the Berlin Hochschule für Musik.<sup>16</sup> Before returning to Korea, Yun wanted to participate in the Course for New Music at Darmstadt, which was considered to be the center of modern music, and he attended in the summer of 1958.<sup>17</sup> (More detailed information regarding Yun's studies in Europe will be discussed in Chapter Three: European Influences.)

Due to his participation at Darmstadt, Yun made connections, which facilitated public performances of two of his works during the following year. *Five Pieces for Piano* was performed in Bilthoven and *Music for Seven Instruments* at Darmstadt.<sup>18</sup> Both were well accepted and received very positive reviews. After such success, Yun knew that he wished to stay in Germany to establish his career.

Yun relocated to Freiburg in 1960. In order to make money he presented radio programs on traditional East Asian music, and most particularly on classical Chinese music. It was at this time that Yun's compositional inspirations began to materialize directly out of traditional Asian music, forms, and instrumental techniques<sup>19</sup>

Yun's wife, Su Ja, was finally able to join him in Europe in 1961 after a five year separation. Due to monetary concerns, their two children remained in Korea, and would not rejoin their parents in Europe for another six years. This time in Yun's life was difficult, both professionally and personally. He had little work, was not winning any competitions, and was

---

<sup>15</sup> McCredie, *Twentieth-century Avant-garde*, 586.

<sup>16</sup> Harold Kunz, "Isang Yun," *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/30747> (accessed December 14, 2008).

<sup>17</sup> McCredie, *Twentieth-century Avant-garde*, 586.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Byeon, "Wounded Dragon," 124.

dealing with the emotional stress of helping his wife acclimate to a new and distinctly foreign European lifestyle.<sup>20</sup>

In 1964, Yun was awarded a grant from the Ford Foundation. This scholarship provided Yun with not only financial assistance, but also publicity and performance opportunities around Europe. It also facilitated Yun's association with the publisher Bote & Bock, a significant boost to his career.<sup>21</sup> Yun's musical output increased and his works were getting more exposure and positive reviews. His *Om mani padme hum*, a Buddhist oratorio, was produced in Hanover in 1965, and *Reak*, an orchestral work, premiered at the Donaueschingen Festival in 1966.<sup>22</sup> Yun was gaining an international reputation, and in 1966 spent two months in the United States giving lectures in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, Tanglewood, and Aspen. He was doing so well that his children were finally able to join their parents in Germany in 1967.

Yun was not involved in any political organizations in Europe (as he had been in Korea) until General Park Chung-Hee seized power in South Korea in 1961. Along with German friends, Korean students living in Germany, and several ambassadors from Bonn, he organized a Korean society devoted to "the necessity and possibility of the recovery of South Korean democracy."<sup>23</sup>

Yun's next major political encounter was one he could not have anticipated: his abduction by the secret police of South Korea (KCIA). On June 17, 1967 Yun was drugged, tortured, interrogated, and taken to South Korea where he was imprisoned, tortured, and charged

---

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 130.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 131.

<sup>22</sup> International Isang Yun Society, "Isang Yun Biography," <http://www.yun-gesellschaft.de/e/nio.htm> (accessed April 2, 2008).

<sup>23</sup> Byeon, "Wounded Dragon," 163.

with espionage.<sup>24</sup> This fictitious accusation was likely generated by the South Korean government because of a trip that Yun had taken to North Korea four years prior.<sup>25</sup> His trip, purely for artistic purposes, was to visit grave frescos, which served as a major source of inspiration for Yun's music. On this trip it was documented that Yun received financial assistance from an unknown source. The money Yun received was to be relayed to South Korea, to help reunite a close friend with his family who had endured a long separation due to the division of North and South Korea into independent countries.<sup>26</sup> While this activity was not exactly legal, the South Korean government made a far worse assumption that Yun received payment because he was acting as a spy.<sup>27</sup> Yun was found guilty and sentenced to life in prison.<sup>28</sup>

While incarcerated, Yun's music publisher, Bote & Bock, appealed to the South Korean government, and he was granted permission to compose in prison.<sup>29</sup> During this time he completed the opera *Die Witwe des Schmetterlings* (The Butterfly's Widow), as well as two chamber works, *Riul* and *Images*. Two of Yun's operas (including The Butterfly's Widow) premiered in Nuremberg in 1969, while he was still captive in Korea.<sup>30</sup>

When news of Yun's abduction spread in Europe there were numerous protests, as well as pleas from well-known politicians, musicians, and artists. Students of the University of Cologne participated in a march through the city to the South Korean embassy. Pianist Claudio Arrau protested by canceling a performance in Seoul. The Mayor of Berlin made a personal

---

<sup>24</sup> McCredie, *Twentieth-century Avant-garde*, 587.

<sup>25</sup> Byeon, "Wounded Dragon," 118.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 166.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 170.

<sup>28</sup> McCredie, *Twentieth-century Avant-garde*, 587.

<sup>29</sup> Byeon, "Wounded Dragon," 231.

<sup>30</sup> McCredie, *Twentieth-century Avant-garde*, 587.



appeal to President Park. In April, 1968 at a performance of Yun's music in Berlin, protests and riots broke out because people were outraged that Yun's works were being performed freely while he remained in prison. Concertgoers were infuriated with the German government as they felt it was not doing enough to secure Yun's release.<sup>31</sup>

Perhaps one of the most notable petitions for Yun's release was a letter written to President Park by Willhelm Maler, the president of the Hamburg Academy of the Arts, an organization in which Yun was a member. This letter was signed by 161 internationally known cultural figures including Wolfgang Fortner, Mauricio Kagel, Rolf Liebermann, Karlhainz Stockhausen, Hans Werner Henze, Gyorg Ligeti, Ernst Krenek, Earle Brown, Edward Staempfli, and Herbert von Karajan. The communication stated:

“...Mr. Yun has value not only in Europe, but also in practically the whole world as a prominent composer. His goal was always to blend the most distinguished traditions of Korean music with Western trends; his work and personage should be regarded as a priceless medium for making known Korean culture and art to the outside world. Without him we would know only very little about your country. Like nobody before him, he has mediated for us through his artistic effort an understanding and love for the Korean way of thinking... Therefore, highly honored Mr. President, you will truly understand that we musicians who signed this letter hope from the bottom of our hearts that you find means and ways to enable the very ill Mr. Yun soon to resume his work as a free and healthy man. The international music world needs Mr. Yun, and his mediator role between the East and West is greatly significant for us all. As ambassador of Korean music he is irreplaceable....”<sup>32</sup>

While the South Korean government never officially absolved Yun of the charges against him, he was released in 1969 due to international pressure.

Yun's reputation as a composer and teacher grew rapidly after he returned to Europe in 1969. Directly following his release Yun received the Kiel Cultural Prize, as well as a major commission of international proportions: he was asked to compose a festival opera for the

---

<sup>31</sup> Byeon, “*Wounded Dragon*,” 209.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 208.

upcoming 1972 Olympic Games in Munich which hailed the slogan “the unity of all cultures.” For this opera, Yun chose the ancient Korean story of *Sim Tjong*, a folk tale with foundations in Buddhist, Taoist, and Confucian philosophies.<sup>33</sup>

Yun began teaching composition at the Berlin’s Hochschule fur Musik in 1970, and became a full professor in 1974. He also taught at the Hochschule fur Musik in Hanover from 1970-71. Yun was granted German citizenship in 1971.<sup>34</sup>

Yun remained politically active throughout the remainder of his life. In 1973 he affiliated himself with Korean exile organizations. Yun attended a conference in Tokyo involving a Korean refugee organization in 1976. The South Korean secret service was planning a repeat abduction of Yun at this conference, but luckily the attack was called off.<sup>35</sup> Yun was continually concerned with peace on the Korean peninsula. His hope was for the reunification of North and South Korea, and the existence of a democratic government. In 1977 he became the chair of the European branch of the Association of Korean Democratic Reunification.

Yun’s compositions began to take on greater political significance in the mid-1970’s. His musical works were the perfect medium for Yun to express and communicate his political feelings, observations, and concerns. In a 1987 interview with Bruce Duffie, Yun said, “My experience of the personal side and political area in Korea happened twenty years ago, and it took ten years for me to be able to translate these experiences into my music. I think today our

---

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 258.

<sup>34</sup> International Isang Yun Society, “Isang Yun Biography,” <http://www.yun-gesellschaft.de/e/nio.htm> (accessed April 2, 2008).

<sup>35</sup> McCredie, *Twentieth-century Avant-garde*, 587.

world very badly needs music that brings us closer together, particularly because there are so many grave problems that people everywhere are having to deal with.”<sup>36</sup>

Yun was successful in incorporating his political sentiments in various musical contexts. Yun noted that he used the concerto’s inherent juxtaposition of soloist against orchestra to portray an individual’s struggle against political oppression.<sup>37</sup> For example, Yun’s *Cello Concerto* depicts the “demand for freedom, purity, and absoluteness”<sup>38</sup> from physical and spiritual imprisonment inspired by his own experiences. His orchestral work *Exemplum in Memoriam Kwangju* was a reaction and memorial to the massacre that occurred in Kwangju, South Korea directly following the assassination of President Park, and the takeover of General Chun Doo Hwan in 1980.<sup>39</sup> Yun also composed five interrelated symphonies, one each year between 1983-1987, which were all politically charged. These symphonies address issues such as nuclear weapons, humanitarianism, the rights of women in East Asia, and the triumph of peace over suppression.<sup>40</sup>

Yun was the recipient of numerous honors and distinctions. In 1985 Yun was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Tübingen.<sup>41</sup> He received the Bundesverdiensstkreuz, the Federal German Republic’s distinguished service cross, in Bonn in 1988.<sup>42</sup> In 1991, Yun was

---

<sup>36</sup> Bruce Duffie, “Composer Isang Yun: A Conversation with Bruce Duffie,” <http://www.bruceDuffie.com/yun.html> (accessed April 2, 2008).

<sup>37</sup> Rainer Sachtleben and Wolfgang Winkler, “Gesprach mit Isang Yun,” ed. Hanns-Werner Heister and Walter-Wolfgang Sparrer, *Der Komponist Isang Yun* (Munich: edition text+kritik, 1987), 293, quoted in Byeon, “*Wounded Dragon*,” 308.

<sup>38</sup> Byeon, “*Wounded Dragon*,” 33.

<sup>39</sup> All Music Guide, “*Exemplum in Memoriam Kwangju*,” <http://www.answers.com/topic/exemplum-in-memoriam-kwangju> (accessed January 4, 2009).

<sup>40</sup> McCredie, *Twentieth-century Avant-garde*, 591

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 587.

<sup>42</sup> Harold Kunz, “Isang Yun,” *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/30747> (accessed December 14, 2008).

named an honorary member of the International Society for Contemporary Music,<sup>43</sup> and was given the medal of the Hamburg Academy in 1992.<sup>44</sup> He gained membership in both the Berlin and Hamburg Academies of the Arts, and in the European Academy of the Arts and Sciences in Salzburg in 1994. In 1995 he received the Goethe Medal from the Goethe Institute in Munich. Yun had planned on attending the first Isang Yun Festival in Seoul, South Korea in 1994, but was unable due to conflict with the government. This was a great disappointment to Yun, as it would have been his first trip to his home country as a successful composer since his release from prison in 1969.<sup>45</sup>

Isang Yun died of pneumonia on November 3, 1995 in Berlin at the age of 78. He was honored by the city of Berlin by being laid to rest in a grave of honor provided by the Berlin City Senate at the Gatow cemetery.<sup>46</sup> Surviving today are 121 of Yun's compositions, which include 22 orchestral works, 4 operas, 10 concertos, 40 chamber works, and 28 instrumental pieces, among others.<sup>47</sup> Yun destroyed all of the works he wrote prior to his study in Europe as he felt they did not accomplish the task of fusing traditional and modern music.<sup>48</sup>

Despite his success as a composer, Yun remained a modest and humble individual. In his interview with Luise Rinser, Yun fantasized about the day he would retire and return to South Korea; a day that never came. "Success? What is success? A shadow, which passes by. Do you

---

<sup>43</sup> McCredie, *Twentieth-century Avant-garde*, 587.

<sup>44</sup> Harold Kunz, "Isang Yun," *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/30747> (accessed December 14, 2008).

<sup>45</sup> McCredie, *Twentieth-century Avant-garde*, 588.

<sup>46</sup> International Isang Yun Society, "Isang Yun Biography," <http://www.yun-gesellschaft.de/e/nio.htm> (accessed April 2, 2008).

<sup>47</sup> Boosey & Hawkes, "Isang Yun," <http://www.boosey.com/cr/composer/Isang+Yun> (accessed December 14, 2008).

<sup>48</sup> Francisco Feliciano, *Four Asian Contemporary Composers: The Influence of Tradition in their Works* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1983), 33.

know whether even one of my works will outlive me? But what would it really matter? I work as much and as well as I can. And one day I'd like to quit and go back to my Korea and sit there by the seashore, very quietly, and just fish and listen to the music in my mind, without writing it down, and find myself in the great silence. And there I would also want to be buried, in the warmth of my native earth."<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> Byeon, "*Wounded Dragon*," 34.

### CHAPTER THREE: EUROPEAN INFLUENCES

Yun's fascination with European music began long before he ever traveled to Europe. Perhaps this attraction began when Yun was just a young boy in Korea, growing up during the Japanese occupation of Korea (1905-1945).<sup>50</sup> The Japanese brought Western culture to Korea, and European music could be found in churches and schools. When asked in his interview with Luise Rinser if he liked hearing the organ for the first time Yun replied, "No, but [it was] surprising, exciting, so loud and so many tones at one time, so massive. I was totally confused. Our instruments play only a single tone, no harmony, and the tones are much softer, people listen to each tone one by one. Here however, people listened to many tones at the same time. It was very exotic. Though I already had listened to European music, I did not know it was that. Near our house was a protestant church. There Western songs were sung and the wind carried the tune over the rice field to us. I learned them quickly. I could sing them before I went to school."<sup>51</sup> Yun found the European music taught in the schools to be quite natural for him, and quickly picked up the equal-tempered scale and sight-singing using solfeggio.

As Yun continued to pursue musical education, he sought out those teachers who had European training. First he studied in Seoul with a Korean composer and violinist who was the student of the German military conductor, Franz Eckert. He "composed in the Western manner but with Korean style,"<sup>52</sup> a concept which must have resonated with Yun. With this teacher, whose name Yun does not mention, he studied music theory and score reading, and became

---

<sup>50</sup> Jeongmee Kim, "Musical Syncretism in Isang Yun's *Gasa*," in *Locating East Asia in Western Art Music*, ed. Yayoi Uno Everett and Frederick Lau (Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), 173.

<sup>51</sup> Jiyeon Byeon, "*The Wounded Dragon: An Annotated Translation of Der verwundete Drache, the Biography of Composer Isang Yun*, by Luise Rinser and Isang Yun" (PhD diss., Kent State University, 2003), 60.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 70.

acquainted with classical era composers as well as the contemporary music of Strauss and Hindemith. Though Yun had encountered the music of Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven in his studies, he admits that his knowledge was “superficial” and that he did not have a proper understanding of Western Classical music.<sup>53</sup> Yun later traveled to Tokyo to become a pupil of the Paris trained Tomojiro Ikenouchi, with whom he studied composition, theory, and counterpoint to begin remedying this shortcoming in his training.<sup>54</sup>

Yun’s initial studies in Europe began at the Paris Conservatory where he studied composition with Tony Aubin and music theory with Pierre Revel (a student of Dukas). Yun recalls Pierre Revel’s response to one of Yun’s solutions to an assigned theory exercise, “[after] he played it on the piano, he sprang from the seat as though stuck by a needle and shouted ‘what you wrote there is impeccable, but odd’ ... It is hard for an East Asian who came from a totally different musical world and had no tradition of polyphony to compose with counterpoint and harmony.”<sup>55</sup> While in Paris, Yun listened to music of composers such as Messiaen, Jolivet, Dutilleux, Rivier, Tansman, Sauguet, and Mihalovici. Though he found modern French music intriguing, he did not identify with, nor wished to emulate this music.<sup>56</sup> Consequently Yun ventured to Berlin in hopes of fulfilling his search for his musical identity.

The following year Yun attended the Berlin Hochschule für Musik. He studied composition with Boris Blacher, the methods of the Vienna School from Josef Rufer, and counterpoint, canon and fugue with Reinhard Schwartz-Schilling.<sup>57</sup> During his time in Berlin, Boris Blacher played a particularly influential role for Yun. While Blacher was not himself a

---

<sup>53</sup> Byeon, “*Wounded Dragon*,” 71.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 103-104.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>57</sup> Andrew McCredie, “Isang Yun” in *Music of the Twentieth-Century Avant-Garde: A Biocritical Sourcebook*, ed. Larry Sitsky (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2002), 586.

serialist, Yun held him in high regard as a composer and mentor. Yun credits Blacher with helping to guide him in finding his own unique sound and style of composition. Blacher himself had been raised in China and, therefore, may have been a particularly fitting teacher for Yun as he would have understood Yun's musical background and sound concept to a greater degree than most.<sup>58</sup> Blacher encouraged Yun to incorporate his Korean heritage into his compositions and to simplify his music so that it could be more easily understood. Yun recalls, "he said to me that I must write in a less complicated way, more clearly, and also take consideration of the interpretation, thus not write too heavily. He also said I should develop my Asian timbre-presentation more clearly."<sup>59</sup>

Yun had studied serial techniques independently while living in Korea, and had already read Josef Rufer's book, *The Composition with Twelve Tones Related Only to One Another*, prior to studying with him in Berlin. Rufer was himself a former assistant to Schönberg, the inventor of the twelve-tone technique. Yun mastered this and other modern techniques while studying with Rufer. Yun composed only a couple of pieces using strict twelve-tone technique including *Fünf Stücke für Klavier* (Five Pieces for Piano) and the *Musik für Sieben Instrumente* (Music for Seven Instruments).<sup>60</sup> Though mastering twelve-tone technique was one of Yun's major motivations for wanting to study in Europe, he did not allow it to define him as a composer. Yun continued to use elements of the twelve-tone system when it suited his purpose. As Feliciano suggests, "He certainly represents a free-quasi-twelve-tone style in his tonal language where he sometimes produced tone-row tables placing the twelve semitones in many different sequences...[but] while Yun uses such tone rows, he uses them only to support the framework of

---

<sup>58</sup> Kim, "Isang Yun's *Gasa*," 172.

<sup>59</sup> Byeon, "*Wounded Dragon*," 104-105.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 106.



his structures ignoring the rows once he feels that they restrict his imagination.<sup>61</sup> Keith Howard corroborates this analysis of Yun's music: "Works up to the third *String Quartet* (1959/61) demonstrate confidence in serialist techniques. But Yun suspected that strict dodecaphony might stifle creativity, hence in *Loyang* (1962), and in works from this to the orchestral *Réak* (1966), he began to move towards freer atonality as he fleshed out a personal solution..."<sup>62</sup> While Yun specifically sought to study contemporary compositional techniques in Europe, they did not, in the end, completely satisfy his compositional voice. They did, however, become a significant part of his compositional vocabulary as elements of these techniques permeate throughout his body of musical literature.

In 1958 Yun participated in the "Course for New Music" at Darmstadt, directed by Dr. Wolfgang Steinecke. It was here at Darmstadt that Yun became exposed to the extreme music of the avant-garde. Yun found the music of Stockhausen, Nono, Boulez, Maderna, and John Cage to be both exciting and confusing. While he felt a tremendous sense of respect and admiration for the avant-garde and could truly identify with it, in the end Yun could not decide if this radical style of composition suited him and his music. "I had to ask myself where I was and how I should move on: whether I should compose in a radical way like these people who belonged to the avant-garde or should I do it my own way according to my Eastern tradition. It was an important decision."<sup>63</sup>

Yun discussed his compositional dilemma with Dr. Wolfgang Steinecke. Steinecke's response was to help Yun get his works performed. Yun sent to Steinecke his *Musik für Sieben*

---

<sup>61</sup> Francisco Feliciano, *Four Asian Contemporary Composers: The Influence of Tradition in their Works* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1983), 33-34.

<sup>62</sup> Keith Howard, "Korean Tradition in Isang Yun's Composition Style," *Ssi-ol: Almanach der Internationalen Isang Yun Gesellschaft*, (1998/99): 79.

<sup>63</sup> Byeon, "Wounded Dragon," 108.

*Instrumente (Music for Seven Instruments)* and submitted *Funf Stucke fur Klavier (Five Pieces for Piano)* to a competition in the Netherlands.<sup>64</sup> While Yun was very ambitious, he was also modest. He was eager to show his works but did not believe them to be worthy of performance, or that they even had the potential to be truly successful. Perhaps this was because Yun knew that he had not completely settled on what constituted his own compositional style. The first movement of *Musik fur Sieben Instrumente* was strictly twelve-tone, while the second was completely different. Of the second movement Yun says, “I had tried to bring in sound memories of our old Korean court music. I wrote down playing techniques for the instrumentalists as they are used in Korea on the old instruments thus as a very accurate vibrato and many sorts of glissando.”<sup>65</sup> To Yun’s pleasant surprise, both works had been programmed for performance the following year (1959). *Musik fur Sieben Instrumente (Music for Seven Instruments)* at Darmstadt, and *Funf Stucke fur Klavier (Five Pieces for Piano)* in the Netherlands.

Leading up to the two performances, Yun’s first significant exposure as a composer in Europe, he was extremely anxious and considered removing the works from the programs. But the performances went on as scheduled and both pieces were well accepted and received positive reviews. The Darmstadter Tagblatt wrote: “The composer strove at least in the cadence for a blending of Korean court music and Western modern music, which Yun learned recently from Blacher and Rufer. The piece is made in good taste with delicate tone colors and the sound and form is distinct. A unique decorative effect, created by the twirling-round wind instruments and modest string instruments, distinguish this piece. An amiable and not complicated piece.”<sup>66</sup>

Another review by Heinz Joachim said, “People may overlook the fact that the serial technique

---

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 111.

can bring enrichment. That is overall where it becomes not an end in itself but combines a primitive musical intuition and surely handcrafted ability like in the Korean, Isang Yun. It would be better for the circumstance of the new music, if these perceptions would be found in the classroom of the Darmstadt summer courses.”<sup>67</sup>

The works performed at Darmstadt and the Netherlands helped Yun gain the exposure and the praise he needed to launch his career as a composer in Europe. The reviews confirmed to Yun that he did not need to adhere strictly to the methods of the Vienna School or follow the trends of avant-garde composers, but that he could combine these ideas in his own unique and personal way with his Korean musical ideals. When Yun reflects on this time in his life he states, “Yes, in those days I had to work to come to terms with the Western compositional techniques. That could look as if I had forgotten that I am East Asian. But when I mastered the new European technique, immediately I started to express my Eastern imagination through that. But truly I never gave up my tradition.”<sup>68</sup> After this success it became clear to Yun that he could not return to Korea. He had found his place in the European musical world.

---

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 137.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RELIGIOUS INFLUENCES

Isang Yun incorporated a vast variety of traditional Korean musical elements in his music, some of which stem directly from Buddhism and Taoism.<sup>69</sup> Religion and philosophy lay inherent in East Asian culture. Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and shamanism, to cite a few, pervade the day-to-day life, rituals, and customs that make up traditional Korean culture. Buddhist and Taoist elements are embedded in Yun's compositional style and provide his music with a meditative quality that permeates throughout his complete compositional output. In his book *Four Asian Contemporary Composers*, in which Yun is featured, Feliciano states "what really sets Yun's music radically apart from that of his Western colleagues using the same medium is his highly spiritual attitude and artistic disposition rooted in Eastern philosophy."<sup>70</sup>

While lecturing at the Salzberg Mozarteum in 1984 Yun explained the influence and relevance of Taoism in his music. Based upon these lectures it was noted "...Taoism not only shaped Yun's worldview and stance as a citizen, but also the basic principles governing the evolution of his creativity and compositional processes."<sup>71</sup>

Key to understanding Taoist philosophy is the concept of yin-yang dualism. The interrelationship between the polar opposites of yin and yang is thought to create balance and harmony in the universe. These opposing forces are responsible for all things and events, as well as constant change and transformation, an accepted truth within Taoist philosophy. Yin embodies more feminine characteristics such as passive, weak, dark, negative, and static, while yang

---

<sup>69</sup> Francisco Feliciano, *Four Asian Contemporary Composers: The Influence of Tradition in their Works* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1983), 66.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>71</sup> Andrew McCredie, "Isang Yun" in *Music of the Twentieth-Century Avant-Garde: A Biocritical Sourcebook*, ed. Larry Sitsky (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2002), 589.

represents masculine behaviors of active, strong, bright, positive, and dynamic.<sup>72</sup> Taoism originated in China long before the Common Era and has become an integral part of most East Asian cultures. This is certainly true for Korean culture, so much that the yin-yang symbol is the central focus of South Korea's national flag.

Isang Yun took this concept of yin-yang dualism and developed it into a compositional technique. Yun himself labeled it *hauptton* technique, literally meaning “main tone” in German. *Hauptton* technique can most simply be described as the existence of a long sustained sound, which is surrounded by various types of ornaments and embellishments. It is the combination of the tone itself as well as the embellishments that surround it, which represent yang and yin respectively. “The main tone is ever present in the long-sustained tone as yang, yet at the same time the elements of yang are surrounded by yin: perpetual fluctuations in dynamics, the microtonal modifications of the main tone, melismas, other types of embellishments. In other words, the two opposite elements, yin and yang are alive, yet in harmony.”<sup>73</sup>

Andrew McCredie sites Yun's orchestral work *Reak* as his first major work using the mature and fully developed *hauptton* technique. Composed in 1966, *Reak* does not use themes, motives, or any of the practices common to the Second Viennese School. Instead it employs “a musical texture determined through long-sustained sounds comprising sonic surfaces, threads, bands, or blocks that follow on or emerge out of each other, as parts as though extracted from an unending continuity of sound. The emphasis is thus primarily on timbral, timbral inflection and

---

<sup>72</sup> Keith Howard, “Korean Tradition in Isang Yun's Composition Style,” *Ssi-ol: Almanach der Internationalen Isang Yun Gesellschaft* (1998/99): 86.

<sup>73</sup> Jeongmee Kim, “Musical Syncretism in Isang Yun's *Gasa*,” in *Locating East Asia in Western Art Music*, ed. Yayoi Uno Everett and Frederick Lau (Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), 185-186.

subtle kaleidoscopic change.”<sup>74</sup> Yun infuses this work with the principles of Taoism on multiple levels. On one level Yun uses main tones decorated by a variety of ornamentations (hauptton technique) to represent the yin-yang principle. But, in a larger analytical context, the way in which Yun strings together various main tones also exemplifies Taoist principle of constant change and transformation.

Another overtly Tao-inspired work is Yun’s *Shao Yang Yin* for harpsichord, also composed in 1966. *Shao* is an adjective meaning light or small, which, in combination with *Yang Yin* in the title, indicates Yun’s intention to musically depict the contradictions and contrasts present in everyday life.<sup>75</sup> In this work Yun depicts the forces of yin and yang dynamically. He contrasts *ff/fff* dynamics in the low register with *p/mp* dynamics in the upper. These contrasting dynamics are meant to both contradict as well complement each other, an essential teaching of the yin/yang doctrine.<sup>76</sup>

Another concept inherent in Taoism is that of balance. Balance, often depicted by the forces of yin and yang, can also be shown through symmetrical forms and arch structures. This is another method Yun used to incorporate Taoist ideals within his compositions. As Kim states in her analysis of *Gasa*, “Yun maintains balance through symmetrical structural distribution of the rhythmic pattern. Deeply rooted in Taoist philosophy, the use of symmetry to achieve balance is present throughout the piece.”<sup>77</sup> Another example is Yun’s cycle of five symphonies. He began composing these in 1983, the same year the *Monolog for bassoon* was written. The symphonies

---

<sup>74</sup> McCredie, *Twentieth-century Avant-garde*, 589-590.

<sup>75</sup> Feliciano, *Four Asian Contemporary Composers*, 58.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Kim, “Isang Yun’s *Gasa*,” 188.

contain arch forms on many levels. Keith Howard notes that each symphony is built around arch forms and if all five are played in sequence they, together, create a single gigantic arch.<sup>78</sup>

Buddhism also played a significant role in Isang Yun's compositions. Though Yun did not consider himself a Buddhist, the religion surrounded him as a child growing up in Korea. In his interview with Louise Rinser, Yun notes that Buddhism has become deeply embedded in Asian culture, similar to how Christianity saturates culture in the West. "Like there are overall Christian churches here, in Korea there are hundreds of Buddhist sanctuaries. People visit them, also without being Buddhist, they hear the singing of the monks, they hear the sound of temple blocks, and low gongs, and people offer incense and know the main teachings of Buddha even if they have been a Confucian or Taoist or Christian. Something of Buddhism is in every East Asian's soul."<sup>79</sup> Also in the interview, Yun recalls vivid memories of Buddhist festivals he witnessed while growing up in Korea. The voices of the monks and their liturgical songs were a distinct and significant musical influence during Yun's childhood.<sup>80</sup>

A hallmark of Yun's compositional style is the lack of metric pulse. Though the same can be said for many avant-garde composers, Yun's motivation for this stems from his Buddhist influences. Yun was not merely conforming to the musical trends of the day, but had distinct purpose in creating the feeling of unmeasured musical sound. Feliciano cites Buddhist chant as well as other musical rites and ceremonies as Yun's source of inspiration. "Yun's relation to Buddhist music is very apparent [as] his music shows no sign of any pulsating rhythm or repeating rhythmic patterns."<sup>81</sup>

---

<sup>78</sup> Keith Howard, *Korean Music Volume 2: Creating Korean Music: Tradition, Innovation and the Discourse of Identity* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2006), 132.

<sup>79</sup> Byeon, "Wounded Dragon," 147.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>81</sup> Feliciano, *Four Asian Contemporary Composers*, 54.

An early orchestral work by Yun, *Bara*, composed in 1960, is one of Yun's first direct references to Buddhism. The word *bara* cites a traditional Buddhist temple dance. Yun drew inspiration from his chosen title, but did not desire a literal depiction in a programmatic sense. Instead he strove to present the energy and feeling that the ritual experience would create. In an analysis of his own work Yun wrote: "Do not expect dance music, rather bring to mind the mysterious and meditative atmosphere of a Buddhist temple in which monks and nuns do exorcism or prayer dances very slowly, and motion under tension transfers gradually to ecstasy in the most extreme concentration. Both meditative peace and ecstatic tension meet you already in the first measure of my orchestral work *Bara*..."<sup>82</sup>

Another overtly Buddhist inspired work was Yun's oratorio, *Om mani padme hum*. Composed in 1964, the title is a well-known Buddhist prayer mantra meaning "greeting to the jewel in the lotus flower." Though Yun uses German text, the work is clearly of Buddhist thought and inspiration as through five movements it depicts the journey to nirvana. In this work he uses two soloists, soprano and baritone, choir, and a large orchestra. The soprano represents the "asking voice of the disciple, the baritone is the answering voice of the mentor, the chorus is the voice of 'all living beings,' which are affirmative and present in prayer. The music according to the text is supposed to express the highest purity as happens in the full deliverance of human beings to Nirvana."<sup>83</sup>

Howard suggests that Yun's final work composed in 1994, *Engel in Flammen – Epilog*, represents the culmination of Yun's journey toward Buddhism. Not only does Yun portray the struggles of society, but his own personal struggles are represented as well. According to Howard's analysis, the *Epilog*, which employs a solo soprano voice, recalls the soprano voice

---

<sup>82</sup> Byeon, "Wounded Dragon," 122.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 146-147.



used in *Om mani padme hum*. Where in the previous 1964 work *Om mani* the soprano represented the questioning disciple, here in *Epilog* she returns as a Buddhist abbess with monks (choir) chanting below her. Here Yun portrays a Buddhist requiem, “imagined as the music heard by the dead soul.”<sup>84</sup>

Yun’s compositional purpose throughout his career was to integrate the many elements of East and West that influenced him to create a unique style of composition. He did not merely use Eastern ideas in a Western context, or vice versa. Instead he chose to “internalize all these external elements and endeavor to attain a high level of artistic expression which surpasses nomenclatures like Eastern and Western, thus trying to achieve a fusion of the external and the spiritual and bring it to a spiritual level that goes beyond verbal description.”<sup>85</sup> This type of deep understanding and synthesis of ideas is known in Zen Buddhism as the “First Principle.”<sup>86</sup> Though Yun does not label himself as a Buddhist, the influence of Buddhism is highly apparent in his music and philosophical thought.

Yun does, however, freely admit to his bond with Taoist philosophy, which has good reason to resonate with Yun. It is, in its way, all-inclusive. Opposing forces are seen as complimentary and, therefore, harmonious. This could provide explanation for many of the contrasting elements in Yun’s life, including the harmonious relationship he creates between Eastern and Western elements in his music. As Louise Rinser explained to Yun of his religious situation, “you belong to none of the single religions explicitly, but you are allied to all, because, for you all are embraced by the Tao. What we call the general, the ultimate, and the

---

<sup>84</sup> Howard, “Korean Tradition,” 96.

<sup>85</sup> Feliciano, *Four Asian Contemporary Composers*, 66.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

incomprehensible, whether Tao, world spirit, Nirvana, or God, that depends on the spatial and spiritual place where we live. You call it Tao.”<sup>87</sup>

---

<sup>87</sup> Byeon, “*Wounded Dragon*,” 148-149.

## CHAPTER FIVE: TRADITIONAL KOREAN INFLUENCES

As a young composer, Yun was enamored with European music and continually sought out ways to learn more about European music history, style, and compositional methods. It was only when his dream of studying European music at its source was realized that Yun found inspiration in the musical traditions of his home country, Korea. It was only after his journey to Europe that Yun began to consciously and thoughtfully incorporate traditional Korean elements into his music.<sup>88</sup> Yun himself admitted this truth: “When I was in Korea, I enjoyed and listened to our rich Korean musical traditions for entertainment. But I realized the hidden treasures of Korean traditional music for the first time only after I came to Europe.”<sup>89</sup> Keith Howard notes that prior to Yun’s journey to Europe, his works “show no attempt to incorporate elements from Korean traditional music.”<sup>90</sup> Yun later removed all works from circulation that he had written prior to his study in Europe as he felt they were not representative of his mature compositional voice.<sup>91</sup>

While Yun presented radio broadcasts in Freiburg in 1960 on the subject of traditional East Asian music, he began to formulate his distinct compositional style. Yun spent a great deal of time studying traditional East Asian music to prepare for his broadcasts. As a result of his research Yun was inspired to compose *Loyang*, a work that incorporated the mood of ancient

---

<sup>88</sup> Francisco Feliciano, *Four Asian Contemporary Composers: The Influence of Tradition in their Works* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1983), 33.

<sup>89</sup> Isang Yun, “Debussy and I,” in *Yun Isang u’i U’mak Segye*, trans. and ed. So’ngman Choi and Eunmi Hong (Seoul: Hangil Sa, 1991), 67, quoted in Kim, “Isang Yun’s *Gasa*,” 171.

<sup>90</sup> Keith Howard, “Korean Tradition in Isang Yun’s Composition Style,” *Ssi-ol: Almanach der Internationalen Isang Yun Gesellschaft* (1998/99): 74.

<sup>91</sup> Feliciano, *Four Asian Contemporary Composers*, 33.

court music, the sounds of traditional Korean instruments, as well as the principles of Taoism.<sup>92</sup> But Yun's method of incorporating these elements was not literal in the least. Jeongmee Kim explains: "He was not interested in quoting folk tunes, nor borrowing traditional Asian instruments, nor composing nostalgic song lyrics. Yun's Korean musical heritage is expressed through more abstract, philosophical, and internalized use of ethnic materials, in particular Hauptton/Hauptklang<sup>93</sup> technique. He relied on the use of Korean classical musical forms and Asian philosophy to compete with the equivalent in Europe. These shape and propel the sounds and structure of his works, while the Western musical heritage and its instruments provide the physical means to articulate Yun's complex sound world."<sup>94</sup>

At the very core of Yun's music is embedded a Korean view of sound. While Western ears are accustomed to hearing a melodic figure accompanied by harmonic progression, Eastern music relies heavily on the role of an individual or central tone. The tone itself is celebrated; adorned with a huge variety of ornaments. These ornaments are not intended to encompass the central tone within a melody, rather they are an essential part of how the tone is able to express itself. The concept of the central tone is prevalent in many Asian countries and spans various

---

<sup>92</sup> Jiyeon Byeon, "The Wounded Dragon: An Annotated Translation of *Der verwundete Drache*, the Biography of Composer Isang Yun, by Luise Rinser and Isang Yun" (PhD diss., Kent State University, 2003), 124-125.

<sup>93</sup> Yun's term *hauptklang* refers to a sound complex, or multiple main tones sounding simultaneously. *Hauptklang* technique is the combination of the sound complex and the ornaments that surround it. As the *Monolog for bassoon* is a solo work, and *hauptklang* technique cannot be used, a detailed discussion of this compositional practice will not be included.

<sup>94</sup> Jeongmee Kim, "Musical Syncretism in Isang Yun's *Gasa*," in *Locating East Asia in Western Art Music*, ed. Yayoi Uno Everett and Frederick Lau (Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), 174-175.

genres of Asian music.<sup>95</sup> Yun describes this phenomenon in a speech he gave at a conference in Berlin:

“While in European music the concept of form plays a decisive part, and notes become significant only when a whole group of them are related horizontally as melody or vertically as harmony, the thousand-year-old tradition of Eastern Asiatic music places the single note, the constructive element, in the foreground. In European music only a series of notes comes to life, so that the individual tone can be relatively abstract, but with us the single tone is alive in its own right. Our notes can be compared to brush strokes as opposed to pencil lines. From beginning to end each note is subject to transformations; it is decked out with embellishments, grace notes, fluctuations, glissandi, and dynamic changes; above all, the natural vibration of each note is consciously employed by a means of expression. A note’s changes in pitch are regarded less as intervals forming a melody than as an ornamental function and part of the range of expression of one and the same note. This method of treating individual notes sets my music apart from other contemporary works. It gives it an unmistakably Asiatic color, which is evident even to the untrained listener.”<sup>96</sup>

Keith Howard discusses several significant factors that explain why Korean music is structured in this way. The first is the contrasting yet complementary relationship between yin and yang. The second is the concept of “never-ending movement.”<sup>97</sup> East Asians hold nature in high regard as well as the continuous flow of elements such as water, air, and time. From an artistic perspective, the flow of sound is thought to be continuous as well. Music exists before sound begins, and continues after sound ends. This is why Yun compares the single tone to “brush strokes as opposed to pencil lines.” A pencil line has a definite beginning and ending, as well as a uniform shape and consistency throughout. But in a brush stroke it is hard to determine where the actual beginning and ending occur. Though it may visually represent one line it can change in a myriad of ways, possess contrasting qualities within each unique stroke, which more

---

<sup>95</sup> Feliciano, *Four Asian Contemporary Composers*, 41.

<sup>96</sup> Harold Kunz, Notes to *Works of Isang Yun*, Wergo 60034, quoted in Feliciano, *Four Asian Contemporary Composers*, 46.

<sup>97</sup> Howard, “Korean Tradition,” 87.

precisely mimics the flow of nature.<sup>98</sup> Yun further explains this idea of continuous flow in an interview with Bruce Duffie: “My music doesn't have a beginning or an end. You could combine elements from one piece into another piece very well.... Music flows in the cosmos and I have an antenna which is able to cut out a piece of the stream. The part which I've cut out is organized and formed through my own thought and body processes, and I commit it to paper. That's why my music is always continuous - like the clouds that are always the same but are never alike one to another.”<sup>99</sup>

Howard also suggests that the physical structure and musical capabilities of traditional Korean instruments have had a profound impact on the Korean concept of tone. While each instrument is unique in tone and structure, they all are extremely flexible in terms of pitch. Many instruments are so flexible that it can be difficult to produce a steady tone.<sup>100</sup> This is directly linked to the Korean musical ideal of sound being embellished and ever changing.

The construction of Korean instruments contributes to their pitch flexibility. The *hai-keum*, for example, is a two-stringed fiddle that has no fingerboard. The instrument is supported by the left knee and played vertically. The two strings are tuned to a fifth, but must be stopped in mid-air to produce different pitches.<sup>101</sup> The *kaya-keum* is a long zither-like instrument with twelve strings. Each string is supported by its own movable bridge. Strings are plucked with the right hand while the left produces ornaments such as pitch changes, vibrato, slurs, and microtones by placing variable downward pressure on the strings.<sup>102</sup> Korean wind instruments

---

<sup>98</sup> Byeon, “*Wounded Dragon*,” 138.

<sup>99</sup> Bruce Duffie, “Composer Isang Yun: A Conversation with Bruce Duffie,” <http://www.bruceduffie.com/yun.html> (accessed April 2, 2008).

<sup>100</sup> Howard, “Korean Tradition,” 87.

<sup>101</sup> Munhwa Kongbobu, *Korean Music*, ed. Kim Ki-su and Lee Kyung-mo (Seoul, Korea: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1959), 66.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 59-60.

are able to modify pitch and tone easily using minimal embouchure adjustment.<sup>103</sup> The *piri*, an oboe-like double reed instrument, has eight open holes, and produces a very flexible tone because of its oversized reed. It is more difficult to play than the Chinese *piri* that it is derived from because the bore is shorter and bigger.<sup>104</sup> The *tai-keum* is the largest horizontal bamboo flute among the Asian flute family. Its tone and pitch are easily modified by the angle of the air-stream, the speed of the air-stream, and the amount in which the tone holes are covered.<sup>105</sup>

The integral role of ornamentation in Korean music stems from the process of teaching music by rote. Traditional Korean music has, until the 1960's, been exclusively an oral tradition. Teachers would demonstrate for students, without identifying which notes were main tones and which were ornamental. Students then had to process the music in their own minds, determining for themselves the true essence of the music. Traditional music was not intended for exact repetition.<sup>106</sup> Interpretation, variety, and creativity were expected. This is perhaps another reference to the Korean ideal of continual flow and constant change found in nature. Thus the ornamentation exists not merely as an accessory to musically significant tones.<sup>107</sup> Yun was certainly conscious of the crucial role of ornamentation in traditional Korean music. Of this he said: "For us in the East, the tone already lives in itself. Every tone in East Asian music is exposed to transformations from the initial stages of action to the dying away. It is furnished with ornamentation, appoggiatura, oscillations, glissandi, and dynamic variations. Above all the natural vibration of every tone is consciously set up as the means of expression."<sup>108</sup>

---

<sup>103</sup> Howard, "Korean Tradition," 87.

<sup>104</sup> Kongbobu, *Korean Music*, 79.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>106</sup> Byong-Won Lee, "The Ornaments in Traditional Korean Music: Structure, Function, and Semantics," *Ssi-ol: Almanach der Internationalen Isang Yun Gesellschaft* (1998/99): 60.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>108</sup> Byeon, "Wounded Dragon," 135.

Yun was able to uniquely combine this Asian style of musical thinking with Western style composition. To help explain his compositional techniques and rationalize his emphasis on individual tones rather than melodies, Yun coined the term *hauptton*, literally meaning “main tone” in German. Yun developed this term to help clarify his concept of tone to his European audience. While Yun’s ideals of tone and sound may be commonplace in Asia, they challenge European principles of melody and structure. Kim explains, “These terminologies help to explain his compositional techniques in more generalized terms, establishing an ideological base for treatment of a tone or group of tones that are organized by a center that is colored by ornamental tone movement.”<sup>109</sup> Yun’s *hauptton* technique quickly became his musical signature, and holds a prominent place in all of his mature compositional works.

Since Yun composes within the context of Western art music, where an appropriate understanding of Korean ornamentation is not commonplace, he does not leave the art of ornamentation up to the performer. He writes out every detail of the ornamentation, some of which exist within the framework of Western notation, others of which he must create new symbols and explanations for, as they are not part of the conventional vocabulary for Western musicians. This was a difficult process for Yun as in his mind he had a highly detailed view of what the ornamentation should sound like. Of this he said, “I wrote down the playing techniques for instrumentalists as they are used in Korea on the old instruments, thus as a very accurate vibrato and many sorts of glissando. In Korea there are of course about thirty kinds of glissando.”<sup>110</sup> To truly emulate the sounds of traditional Korean instruments, Yun had to create new, and often very difficult, techniques for the performers. In his biographical interview with

---

<sup>109</sup> Kim, “Isang Yun’s *Gasa*,” 184.

<sup>110</sup> Byeon, “*Wounded Dragon*,” 109.



Louise Rinser, Yun recalled a rehearsal of his *Colloides Sonores* during which the musicians posed severe resistance to his work over seemingly impossible ornamental techniques:

“That piece [*Colloides Sonores*] is hard to play. I wanted to achieve a sound character of one of the ancient Korean instruments in each of the three parts. I had very exact images of sound. But these sound pictures are very complicated. I put new figures and intervals to each voice... On the program there were four very demanding pieces. Ligeti’s *Atmospheres*, Castiglioni’s *Rondels*, one by Bo Nilsson and mine. The orchestra members did not want to perform this program and especially not my piece above all. There was always agitation at the rehearsals... the [principal] cellist said that one simply cannot play these glissandi pizzicati; it is an absolutely impossible technique. Then I stood up and said, ‘I can show the gentleman that it is surely possible.’ I came up to the stage, and asked one of the cellists to lend me his instrument. He was reluctant, as he said, ‘to place that expensive instrument into my hands.’ The one next to him gave his to me, and I sat and played. I showed that it is quite possible to play glissandi pizzicati. The musicians were impressed that I truly understood something about technique, and from then on they worked... I had succeeded in getting what I wanted, my new sound imagination tried out.”<sup>111</sup>

While many of Yun’s contemporaries sought to incorporate new and unusual instruments into their works in hopes of creating original and exotic sounds, Yun did just the opposite. He relied on standard Western orchestration, but was able to produce “different timbres and percussive qualities that imitate the sounds of the East.”<sup>112</sup> Yun was oftentimes quite obvious about the Korean instrument(s) he was imitating, and on several occasions titled a piece, or movement, after the instrument itself. This is certainly true for his 1971 work *Piri*, for solo oboe. The Korean *piri* is most similar to the Western oboe in that it is about the same size and uses a double reed. In contrast, the *piri* is cylindrical rather than conical, made of bamboo rather than grenadilla, and has just eight open tone holes. Techniques typical to the *piri* include ornamental grace notes, various types of vibrato, glissando, dynamic and color changes, and the bending of pitch.<sup>113</sup> All of these techniques are highlighted in Yun’s *Piri*, in which he outlines meticulous

---

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 127-128.

<sup>112</sup> Kim, “Isang Yun’s *Gasa*,” 175.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 177.

instructions for the performer so that the extended techniques are carried out to his true intent. Of this work Yun says, “I wanted to bring both the sounds and the philosophical associations of the *piri* to the Western oboe. I use a full range of sounds from very low to very high... New techniques for producing new sounds give height and depth, and different breathing techniques give new sounds...”<sup>114</sup> The work masterfully incorporates the traditional sounds of Korea with the modern compositional techniques of Europe. Howard notes that the work’s construction is highly reminiscent of traditional Korean music: “Long-held pitches are introduced with a melismatic flurry, and many of the pitches conclude with a gently rising portamento: “main tones” are the basic ingredient.”<sup>115</sup> The rising portamento is a reference to a Korean court ritual in which each tone has the same type of portamento added to the end.<sup>116</sup> Yun juxtaposes these traditional Korean elements with 12-tone technique. Sparrer states: “A matter-of-fact analysis will show that *Piri* is organized on a strictly 12-tone sequence with nine chains until the end of the second part.”<sup>117</sup>

Yun also makes direct references to specific Korean instruments in *Collides Sonores* for string orchestra. Each of the three movements of this work is inspired by a different traditional Korean string instrument and is titled accordingly.<sup>118</sup> The second movement, entitled *Gomungo*, represents the Korean *komun-ko*, a six-string zither comprised of free strings that produce a drone as well as fretted strings, which perform the melody.<sup>119</sup> Yun mimics this instrument by using various types of glissandos and vibratos typical of the instrument throughout the movement. He highlights its style specifically at the beginning of the movement by writing a

---

<sup>114</sup> Howard, “Korean Tradition,” 83.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>117</sup> Wolfgang Sparrer, Notes to *Isang Yun: Chamber Music*, Col Legno CD AU 31808.

<sup>118</sup> Kim, “Isang Yun’s *Gasa*,” 176.

<sup>119</sup> Kongbobu, *Korean Music*, 58-59.

drone in the lower strings and a series of pizzicato tremolos for the upper strings, together producing a *komun-ko*-like sonority.<sup>120</sup>

Yun was inspired by many facets of traditional Korean music and portrayed them in different ways. His 1962 work *Loyang* for chamber ensemble contains a host of different Korean influences. The title of the work references the ancient capital of East Central China, a city known for being a cultural and musical center, and whose musical traditions continue to exist in Korea. Yun was directly inspired by one of the Loyang's surviving works, *Spring in Loyang*,<sup>121</sup> and sought to depict the ancient city's court music.<sup>122</sup> Yun's composition uses serial techniques as well as a host of Korean-inspired elements. Prominently displayed is Yun's Hauptton technique. In Yun's *Loyang*, an ensemble work, different instruments display individualized virtuosity at varying intervals around a collective main-tone. These instrumental layers create a tremendous amount of activity over what is fundamentally a monotone structure.<sup>123</sup> Also featured are direct references to traditional Korean instruments. The third movement showcases the traditional accompaniment rhythm of the Korean *chang-ko* drum. Yun portrays this traditional rhythm by using a combination of bass drum and snare drum representing the contrasting sounds of the two heads of the *chang-ko*, which are constructed of different types of skin.<sup>124</sup> Also prominent in this movement are the sound of glissandos which are meant to emulate the sound of the *piri*.<sup>125</sup>

While Yun gave many of his works Korean titles, it is important to note that even though the Korean element the work is titled after may have served as Yun's inspiration, he does not

---

<sup>120</sup> Kim, "Isang Yun's *Gasa*," 176.

<sup>121</sup> Feliciano, *Four Asian Contemporary Composers*, 63.

<sup>122</sup> Byeon, "*Wounded Dragon*," 125.

<sup>123</sup> Howard, "Korean Tradition," 81.

<sup>124</sup> Kongbobu, *Korean Music*, 86.

<sup>125</sup> Kim, "Isang Yun's *Gasa*," 176.

intend the work to be a literal depiction of that element. Yun clarifies that the titles only “indicate the character of the pieces of the moment. I explain it mostly in the scores in which is shown the sound fantasy of which is being carried in a certain direction.”<sup>126</sup> Some of these titles include:

*Rial, Piri, Bara, Nore, Shao Yang Yin, Gagok, Namo, Reak, Garak, and Gasa.*

*Gasa*, for example, is a Korean word meaning lyrics, indicating a genre of traditional Korean narrative song called *kasa*, usually performed by a female singer with flute (*tai-keum*) and an hourglass shaped drum (*chang-ko*) accompaniment.<sup>127</sup> Keeping well within the boundaries of traditional Western instrumentation, Yun assigned the melodic role of the female voice to the violin, and replaced the accompanimental instruments with piano. Kim’s analysis points out that the melodic line of the violin alternates freely between Yun’s hauptton technique and whole or fragmented occurrences of twelve-tone writing.<sup>128</sup> This is a true testament to Yun’s two major musical influences, traditional Korean sound blended with contemporary European compositional structures. The accompanimental role of the piano often mimics the structural role that the *chang-ko* drum would play in *kasa*’s traditional form. Yun remarks that the piano “has only an ornamental and rhythmic function. It marks the sections in this piece as normally the percussion does in my orchestral pieces.”<sup>129</sup> The chords sounded by both hands in the piano represent the low and high drumheads of the *chang-ko* being struck simultaneously while the piano trills mimic the high-pitch drumhead being rolled.<sup>130</sup> Traditional *kasa* style has a very

---

<sup>126</sup> Byeon, “*Wounded Dragon*,” 136.

<sup>127</sup> Kongbobu, *Korean Music*, 28.

<sup>128</sup> Kim, “Isang Yun’s *Gasa*,” 187.

<sup>129</sup> Byeon, “*Wounded Dragon*,” 135.

<sup>130</sup> Kim, “Isang Yun’s *Gasa*,” 187-188.

specific symmetrical tempo structure of slow-fast-slow, and Yun brings this characteristic into his own work.<sup>131</sup>

Yun also transplanted the vocal techniques utilized in traditional Korean singing into the solo violin part in *Gasa*. Korean vocal music capitalizes on the natural contrasts inherent in the human voice, particularly the distinction between the normal voice and falsetto voice. Yun represents this difference by using bowed violin sound in contrast with harmonics. Also common in traditional Korean singing is the act of modifying vowel sounds to help keep the tone alive throughout long held pitches. Yun translates this technique in *Gasa* by supplying the violin with seven different kinds of vibrato indications, often specifying multiple types of vibrato in different places throughout a single sustained note.<sup>132</sup>

As a young musician Isang Yun aspired to learn the history and techniques of Western art music. But as a composer he could not deny his strong Korean musical heritage. His music truly came alive when he was able to bring together the Western tradition that he became part of with the Eastern tradition that was a part of him. As Yun said in a 1987 interview with Bruce Duffie: “I’ve had two experiences, and I know the practice of both Asian music and European. I am equally at home in both fields. I’m a man living today, and within me is the Asia of the past combined with the Europe of today. My purpose is not an artificial connection, but I’m naturally convinced of the unity of these two elements. For that reason it’s impossible to categorize my music as either European or Asian. I am exactly in the middle. That’s my world and my independent entity.”<sup>133</sup>

---

<sup>131</sup> Byeon, “*Wounded Dragon*,” 136.

<sup>132</sup> Kim, “Isang Yun’s *Gasa*,” 188.

<sup>133</sup> Bruce Duffie, “Composer Isang Yun: A Conversation with Bruce Duffie,” <http://www.bruceduffie.com/yun.html> (accessed April 2, 2008).

## CHAPTER SIX: *MONOLOG FOR BASSOON*: ORIGIN AND ANALYSIS

### Origin

Isang Yun's *Monolog for bassoon* was composed in 1983/4, but the origin of this work actually begins several years prior with Yun's *Clarinet Concerto*.<sup>134</sup> The *Clarinet Concerto* was composed in 1981 for Swiss clarinetist Eduard Brunner, who is most recognized for his thirty-year term as principal clarinetist of Munich's Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra. He premiered the work in Munich on January 29, 1982.<sup>135</sup> Notable about the *Clarinet Concerto* is the use of bass clarinet, rather than clarinet, as the solo voice during the middle movement. The following year, Yun extracted the solo line from the second movement and used it as the structural basis for a solo bass clarinet work. The resulting composition, written for Dutch bass clarinet virtuoso Harry Sparnaay, became Yun's *Monolog for bass clarinet* and was premiered April 9, 1983.<sup>136</sup> With changes, likely to accommodate range, Yun also published a version of the same work for bassoon. Yun maintained in his 1987 interview with Bruce Duffie that he composes strictly by commission,<sup>137</sup> and Yun's scores usually include a dedication to the commissioner. However, the *Monolog for bassoon* contains no such dedication and it is unknown whether it was created for a particular individual. It was premiered on February 3, 1985 by French bassoonist Alexandre Ouzounoff.

Precedent for Yun's solo works being performed on other instruments had been set several years prior with *Piri*, a composition for solo oboe. *Piri*, composed in 1971 for oboist

---

<sup>134</sup> Boosey & Hawkes, "Monolog for bassoon," <http://www.boosey.com/cr/music/Isang-Yun-Monolog/4420> (accessed December 14, 2008).

<sup>135</sup> Isang Yun, *Konzert für Klarinette und Orchester* (Berlin: Bote & Bock, 1981).

<sup>136</sup> Boosey & Hawkes, "Monolog for bass clarinet," <http://www.boosey.com/cr/music/Isang-Yun-Monolog/1643> (accessed December 14, 2008).

<sup>137</sup> Bruce Duffie, "Composer Isang Yun: A Conversation with Bruce Duffie," <http://www.bruceduffie.com/yun.html> (accessed April 2, 2008).

Georg Meerwin, gained quick popularity. Before long, musicians of other instruments took notice of *Piri* and began to perform it. Clarinetists in particular performed and recorded *Piri*, including Eduard Brunner. Wolfgang Sparrer noted about *Piri*: “Although it was originally written for oboe, the composer has allowed interpretations for other instruments. Due to its high demands regarding playing technique and successful balance between construction and expression, *Piri* achieved so much popularity within only a few years that it was often chosen as a compulsory piece in music competitions.”<sup>138</sup> Because of the widespread popularity of *Piri*, Yun may have anticipated the idea of creating an alternate edition of *Monolog for bass clarinet* for bassoon.

Since there are distinct differences in range, key, and clef notation between the two instruments, publishing a new version of the work for bassoon was necessary to encourage performances. As this analysis specifically addresses the *Monolog for bassoon*, an in-depth discussion of Yun’s *Monolog for bass clarinet* will not be included with the exception of highlighting the differences between the bassoon and bass clarinet versions as explained below.

In a discussion of his compositional process, Yun points out to Luise Rinser: “I do not exhaust my possibilities in any one piece. There always remains something unsolved in form. I make that the starting point of another work. I must always take something new as a challenge. If someday no more new ideas come up, I would stop composing.”<sup>139</sup> This not only illustrates the cohesive and sometimes cyclical connections between Yun’s works, but also gives explanation for his use of the middle movement of the *Clarinet Concerto* as the basis for an expanded work that would eventually become the *Monolog for bassoon*.

---

<sup>138</sup> Wolfgang Sparrer, Notes to *Isang Yun: Chamber Music*, Col Legno CD AU 31808.

<sup>139</sup> Jiyeon Byeon, “*The Wounded Dragon: An Annotated Translation of Der verwundete Drache*, the Biography of Composer Isang Yun, by Luise Rinser and Isang Yun” (PhD diss., Kent State University, 2003), “*Wounded Dragon*,” 304.

While Yun rarely quotes material from one piece to another, the work *Namo* (written in 1971) is an instance in which Yun was able to create two versions of the same work that successfully convey his musical goals.<sup>140</sup> The traditional Korean shaman's song that inspired *Namo* is typically sung by a solo female voice. Yun's initial version of the work is scored for three soprano voices and orchestra. The three solo voices encircle the main tone and work together to show the multifaceted and flexible nature of a single melodic line. Yun later scored a second version of *Namo* for a single voice. This version is equally effective in conveying the melody's growth in a setting more akin to the traditional Korean inspiration. With both versions Yun demonstrates in different ways the complex and versatile nature of the original melodic line.

Another occasion in which Yun reuses his own material is in the case of the 1978 piece *Salomo* for solo flute or alto flute. *Salomo* comes from an alto flute solo that Yun wrote as part of his 1977 cantata *Der Weise Mann* (*The Wise Man*). Large sections of the original solo remain intact in the new composition, while new musical material is also used to fill out the work. Yun uses alternating sections of identical material with sections of newly composed or modified material.<sup>141</sup> The process Yun used in creating *Salomo* is comparable to Yun's later molding of the slow movement of the *Clarinet Concerto* into the *Monolog for bassoon*.

The precedents set by *Namo* and *Salomo* show that Yun's reuse and expansion of his own musical material in the *Monolog for bassoon* and *Clarinet Concerto* is not an anomaly. Just as the material in *Namo* can be convincingly conveyed by one or three voices, the material in the *Clarinet Concerto* can be convincingly conveyed without orchestral accompaniment and rescored for another instrument. Likewise, Yun can maintain similar structural shape by

---

<sup>140</sup> Ibid, 279.

<sup>141</sup> Dae-Sik Hur, "A Combination of Asian Language with Foundations of Western Music: An Analysis of Isang Yun's *Salomo* for Flute Solo or Alto Flute Solo" (PhD diss., University of North Texas, 2005), 32.



alternating between identical and newly composed sections as he did in *Salomo*. The intervening sections then expand the piece to make it a viable single-movement composition.

The second movement of the *Clarinet Concerto* can be divided into three large sections, which then serve as beginning, middle and end units of the *Monolog for bassoon*. Between each of these three sections Yun expands the *Monolog for bassoon* by inserting new sections of music between each of those found in the *Clarinet Concerto*. The *Monolog for bassoon* then contains six sections total. Sections I, IV, and VI are material directly quoted from the *Clarinet Concerto*, while sections II, III and V are newly composed. The chart below (see table 6.1) maps out the *Monolog for bassoon* and indicates where the musical material is related to the *Clarinet Concerto*.

**Table 6.1** Comparison of Musical Material

<i>Clarinet Concerto</i>	mm.129-142	-----		mm.144-152	mm. 153-155	-----	mm. 155-164
<i>Monolog for bassoon</i>	Section I	Section II	Section III	Section IV		Section V	Section VI
	mm. 1-14	mm.14-33	mm. 34-45	mm. 46-54	mm. 55-57	mm. 58-80	mm. 81-93
	Identical in both works	Music new to <i>Monolog</i>	Music new to <i>Monolog</i>	Identical material, Transposed down a Perfect 4th	Identical in both works	Music new to <i>Monolog</i>	Identical in both works

While the *Monolog for bassoon* shares all of its structural and compositional material with the *Monolog for bass clarinet*, there are some notable pitch differences that go beyond simple transposition and notational details. Yun made these changes due to the range constrictions of the bassoon, and did so in a thoughtful manner. Passages in the low and middle range of the *Monolog for bass clarinet* remain at the same pitch level in the *Monolog for bassoon*, while the melodic lines in the highest register are transposed down to accommodate the limitations of the bassoon's range. Yun writes as high as a concert A for bass clarinet but only up

to a D# for the bassoon. This truncates the range of the *Monolog for bassoon* by a tritone. Rather than simply transposing passages that extend beyond the bassoon's range down an octave, Yun employed various levels of transposition to keep the bassoon playing in the upper-most register, so that the timbral affect he desired would be maintained. The works are compared in the chart below (see table 6.2).

**Table 6.2** Comparison of Identical and Transposed Material

	Section I	Section II	Section III	Section IV		Section V		Section VI
<i>Monolog for bass clarinet</i>	mm. 1-14	mm. 14-33	mm. 34-45	mm. 46-54	mm. 55-57	mm. 58-63	mm. 64-80	mm. 81-93
<i>Monolog for bassoon</i>	Identical	Identical	Identical	Transposed down a Perfect 4 <sup>th</sup>	Identical	Transposed down a Major 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Varies between identical and transposed material	Identical

The differences between the *Monolog for bass clarinet* and the *Monolog for bassoon*, other than large sections of direct transposition, all exist in measures 64 through 80. Here Yun fluctuates freely between identical pitches and various levels of transposition. The musical contour remains identical between the two works, with the exception of one note in each of measures 66 and 67. In both measures the bassoon reaches a high D# via a lower neighbor C#. The corresponding measures in the *Monolog for bass clarinet* employ an upper neighbor tone instead. Rhythm in the *Monolog for bassoon* also contains several modifications, which all occur during fast, technical passages in the upper register. In each instance the *Monolog for bassoon* contains at least one note fewer per beat than the *Monolog for bass clarinet*. These examples are displayed in the chart below (see table 6.3).

**Table 6.3** Rhythmic Discrepancies

	mm. 77 beat 4	mm. 78 beat 1	mm. 78 beat 5	mm. 78 beat 6	mm. 79 beat 1	mm 79 beat 4
<i>Monolog for bass clarinet</i>	8 notes	9 notes	8 notes	5 notes	8 notes	7 notes
<i>Monolog for bassoon</i>	7 notes	8 notes	7 notes	4 notes	6 notes	6 notes

The remaining analysis considers the *Monolog for bassoon* as an independent work, and does not attempt to provide explanation for the *Clarinet Concerto* or *Monolog for bass clarinet*.

### Yun's Hauptton Technique

In order to correctly identify haupttons within the work one must understand how Yun's phrases are structured. Yun's ideals of phrasing are derived from traditional Korean music in which phrases are structured around a single tone, rather than motivic development as in Western music. These main tones make up the large-scale melodic content of the piece. Each phrase lasts the length of a breath in which there is just one main tone.<sup>142</sup> All other tones are considered different forms of ornamentation, however the main tone can freely change registers within the phrase. The ornamentation often encircles or leads to the main tone. Keith Anderson notes Yun's explanation of Korean music: "Traditionally every tone starts with a grace note and when it is established it takes on vibrato, leading to an explosion of sound, a final ornament and a continuation on another level."<sup>143</sup> Likewise, Yun's haupttons are most often preceded by one or more grace notes; they are least often sounded as the initial note of a phrase. Also paralleling traditional practice, Yun embellishes the hauptton by a variety of means. In sections with a great amount of ornamental activity, the hauptton may not easily present itself visually in the score.

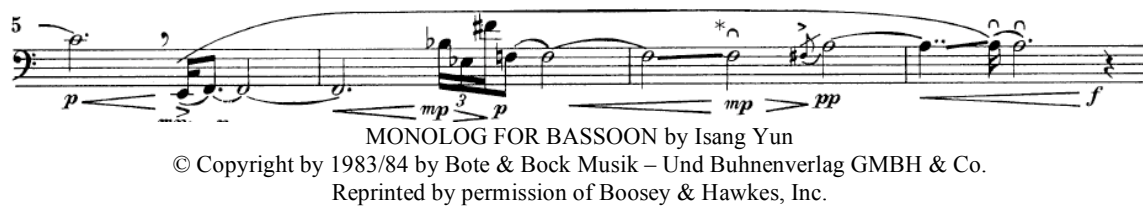
<sup>142</sup> Garrett Mellon, "Isang Yun," [http://humanitiescenter.nsysu.edu.tw/engvision/webplan\\_person34.php](http://humanitiescenter.nsysu.edu.tw/engvision/webplan_person34.php) (accessed December 14, 2008).

<sup>143</sup> Naxos, "Isang Yun Biography," [http://www.naxos.com/composerinfo/Isang\\_Yun/21621.htm](http://www.naxos.com/composerinfo/Isang_Yun/21621.htm) (accessed December 14, 2008).

The listener will have an easier time identifying the hauptton owing to an audible emphasis on a particular pitch.



A clear illustration of Yun's application of traditional main tone can be found in measure 5 of the piece (see example 6.1). The long F is preceded by a grace note. It is embellished by a melismatic ornament before continuing an octave higher and is then followed by a rising portamento figure, all the while fluctuating in dynamic.

**Example 6.1 Measures 5-8<sup>144</sup>**




As with most Eastern art forms, Korean musical traditions are intertwined with Taoism and specifically the concept of yin and yang. As explained in Chapter Four, the hauptton is associated with yang, stable and constant, and the ornaments are associated with yin, active and volatile. This creates a symbiotic relationship. In Yun's phrases, the note that is most stable and restful is the hauptton, and the notes that are most active and create the most tension are ornamental.

Yun does not always follow these rules to the letter. In bars 34-36 the D natural is clearly the main tone, embellished by dynamic variations, small grace notes in measure 36 and a rising portamento at the end of that bar (see example 6.2). However, this note is not preceded by a grace note as is typical.

<sup>144</sup> In his scores, Yun uses  above a note to raise the pitch a quartertone, and  above a note to lower a pitch a quartertone. The asterisk in measure 7 explains this in the score.


### Example 6.2 Measures 34-36



MONOLOG FOR BASSOON by Isang Yun  
© Copyright by 1983/84 by Bote & Bock Musik – Und Bühnenverlag GMBH & Co.  
Reprinted by permission of Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.

Likewise, an ornament does not close the first phrase of the *Monolog for bassoon* as Yun's definition suggests (see example 6.3). The E and C# lead to the main tone C in bar 2. While the initial E serves as a point of departure, the C is the focal note of the phrase as it has the clearest feeling of stability and restfulness.

### Example 6.3 Measures 1-3



MONOLOG FOR BASSOON by Isang Yun  
© Copyright by 1983/84 by Bote & Bock Musik – Und Bühnenverlag GMBH & Co.  
Reprinted by permission of Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.

Below is a list of the haupttons used throughout the *Monolog for bassoon* (see table 6.2). It includes which haupttons govern particular measures, as well as the total number of different haupttons employed in each section. A musical realization of this can be found in Appendix A.

### *Monolog for bassoon: An Overview*

The first section of the *Monolog for bassoon* serves as a slow and meditative introduction to the piece. Yun creates a meditative atmosphere by making use of dynamic levels *pppp* to *mp* (with one exception) and allowing long, sustained tones to dominate the landscape. To break up the monotony of so much sustained sound, long tones are connected by and decorated with grace note ornamentation. No tone is without at least one crescendo or decrescendo and Yun twice indicates pitch bending to a quartertone. These dynamic and quartertone shifts are Yun's way of

**Table 6.4** Hauptton Chart

Section	Haupttons with Measure Numbers											Hauptton Totals
I	C 1-5	F 5-8	A 9-11	C 11-14								3 C, F, A
II	C# 14-16	G# 17-18	F# 19-20	C# 21-22	G 22-24	Ab 24-26	A 26-27	C# 28-29	D 29-31	C# 32	A 33	6 C#, D, F#, G, G#/Ab, A
III	D 34-36	Eb 37-38	A 39-42	Eb 42-44	G# 44-45							4 D, Eb, G#, A
IV	Bb 46-49	B 49-51	Eb 51-54	A 55-57								4 Eb, A, Bb, B
V	C# 58-65	D#/Eb 65-79	C# 79-81									2 C#, D#(Eb)
VI	A 81-86	F 86-92	C 92-93									3 C, F, A

musically notating that a long note should never be static or still. In line with the traditional Korean concept of sound, the individual tone is always alive and ever changing. Yun makes a point of inscribing this ideal throughout his music. Also prominent in this first section is the concept of ascent. Musical lines most often begin below the bass clef staff and rise up far above, spanning a total range of nearly three octaves. The concept of ascent is also present in the hauptton analysis of this section. The haupttons occur at the end of each ascending line, and spell out C, F, A, eventually culminating on C<sup>4</sup> at the conclusion of the section. While not a hauptton, the very first note of the piece, a low E, is highly significant. This E establishes a place of origin, which the bassoon attempts to return to later in the work, but is unable.

Yun immediately delves into a new character after the close of the first section. The mood of the second section is busy, scattered, and unsettled, with rapid note movement, extreme

and brisk dynamic shifts, and an almost constant use of ornamentation including grace notes, accents, slides, and trills. The melismas found throughout section two, which are often arpeggiations with occasional passing figures, have a modal feel reminiscent of traditional Korean music. The hauptton analysis of this section maintains the rather scattered and unfocused scene that Yun presents. He employs eleven haupttons, utilizing six different notes: C#, D, F#, G, G#(Ab), A. These are significantly less apparent than in the first section as they do not always mark themselves with duration and are often hidden among constant and intense ornamentation.

The third section, beginning in measure 34, presents another immediate shift in style and attitude. Yun begins the section with a sudden and unexpected long tone of ten beats, a stark contrast from the activity of the second section. Though a few select notes make their way up to *ff*, the majority of this section fluctuates within a much softer dynamic range: *ppp-mp*. There is more sustained sound than in the previous section, but contains far more ornamentation than the opening. Beyond dynamics, Yun uses grace notes, slides, quartertones, trills and tremolos to shape the third section. Some fragments, for example measure 39 (see example 6.4), recall the ascending melodic gestures of section one (see example 6.1, page 44), but a more varied melodic line and increased use of ornamentation cloud any true parallel between the two sections.

#### **Example 6.4 Measure 39**



MONOLOG FOR BASSOON by Isang Yun  
 © Copyright by 1983/84 by Bote & Bock Musik – Und Bühnenverlag GMBH & Co.  
 Reprinted by permission of Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.

The hauptton analysis also proves this section to be distinctly different from the two prior sections. While section one uses just three clearly identifiable haupttons and section two employs many different haupttons that are difficult to decipher among flourishes of dense ornamentation,

section three displays five haupttons (four different notes) in a manner still far less obvious than section one, yet more directly than section two. The haupttons used in section three are: D, Eb, G#, A.

Section four, measures 46-57, is a direct quotation from the middle section of Yun's *Clarinet Concerto*. It, again, marks a clear and distinctly different character than the sections that have come before. While the previous section remained in the lower end of the dynamic range, this fourth section functions exactly opposite, ranging from *f-ffff*, with the exception of just one *p* marking. As per usual for Yun, even within a truncated dynamic spectrum the performer is guided with constant use of crescendos and decrescendos to make subtle changes, keep the notes alive, and avoid stagnation. Also new to this section is a distinct shift in register. While Yun uses the full range of the instrument in most sections, he focuses heavily on the upper-most octave of the bassoon's range, reserving lower pitches for use as grace note interjections. Because of this focus on the extreme upper range of the instrument, primarily sustained tones between A and Eb, the majority of section four is notated in treble clef. Ornamentation is handled somewhat differently in this section as well. Yun focuses on pitch bends and quartertones to enhance and color long-held upper register pitches and uses grace notes as interjections amid sustained sound. Four haupttons are used in this section (Eb, A, Bb, and B), which are displayed even more prominently than in the previous two sections.

Section five is the longest and most melodically diverse section of the piece. It spans measures 58 through 80 and contains the greatest variety of dynamics, melodic ideas and ornaments seen thus far. In contrast, it contains just two haupttons, the fewest number of any of the sections in the work. Haupttons are given greater prominence in this section as well. The D#, in particular, is repeated continually and is easily heard by the listener without assistance or



analysis, unlike the haupttons found in section two which are masked by ornamentation and short duration. The haupttons utilized in this section appear as a small arch formation: C#-D#(Eb)-C#, with most significant emphasis placed on the D#. Though this section marks the climax of the work, as the haupttons are clear and repeated, they do not mark any sense of arrival or relief for the listener. Rather this climax represents a struggle in which the anticipated goal of the piece, an arrival on high E, never comes to fruition. E, the very first note of the piece and the only note not used as a hauptton in the entire work, is the true resolution in not only the arch form represented in this section but the *Monolog for bassoon* as a whole.

The sixth, and final section of Yun's *Monolog for bassoon* is almost identical to the final section of the *Clarinet Concerto's* second movement. Though the music that precedes this final section differs between the two works, the sudden change in register, dynamic, and character remains the same. Both works immediately shift to a more subdued and retrospective tone. Yun redirects his focus to the lower register of the instrument, and the lower end of the dynamic spectrum: *ppp-mp*. While the presence of ornamentation, including trills and grace notes, remains high, there is a clear focus on descending musical lines. Yun's emphasis on descent is also mimicked in his use of haupttons. Only three are used, and create a descending pattern of A, F, and C, which recall in retrograde the haupttons of the opening section. Though this section concludes the work, it produces a distinctly unsettled feeling. It lacks finality due to the way Yun incorporates the ornamentation. The final note of the work, a low C, is a perfect example, as it does not just fade away as a single grounded tone but trills to a Db (see example 6.5). This creates an atmosphere of restlessness rather than finality.

### Example 6.5 Measures 92-93



MONOLOG FOR BASSOON by Isang Yun

© Copyright by 1983/84 by Bote & Bock Musik – Und Bühnenverlag GMBH & Co.  
Reprinted by permission of Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.

### Ornamentation

As with Yun's compositions, traditional Korean music utilizes a symbiotic use of main-tone and ornaments within a monophonic structure. Even traditional Korean ensemble music is basically constructed of single melodic elements played together rather than a melody supported by harmony as is traditionally found in Western music. While the role of the main tone in Korean music is clearly the melodic underpinning, the ornaments help to create melodic activity, generating motion or stillness, growth and decline. They are not simply decorations on top of the main melody; rather they are the vehicle for development and variation of the main tone.

In traditional Korean music trills and tremolos serve as melodic expansion. This role contrasts that of trills in traditional Western music where their function is to create harmonic direction from dissonance to resolution, therefore implying harmonic direction. Since the focal goal of ornaments in traditional Korean music is melodic development with an absence of harmonic underpinnings, the trill should be approached solely from a melodic context. This concept is highly evident in the way Yun uses a trill on the last note of the *Monolog for bassoon* (see example 6.5). As previously mentioned, the trill does not end or resolve, so there is no possibility of harmonic function. Instead it serves to color the hauptton low C, giving the end of the work an unsettled quality. Another melodic use of the trill is exemplified in measure 15 (see example 6.6). Here the hauptton C# is interrupted and intertwined with short melismas, and the

trill is used to maintain the busy and scattered quality found throughout section two, while still allowing the C# to stand out as the main tone of this phrase.

#### Example 6.6 Measures 14-16



MONOLOG FOR BASSOON by Isang Yun  
© Copyright by 1983/84 by Bote & Bock Musik – Und Bühnenverlag GMBH & Co.  
Reprinted by permission of Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.

Trills can also provide texture among notes that serve other melodic functions surrounding the hauptton. In the last two beats of measure 18 (see example 6.7), Yun employs trills to embellish a melisma that rises from the G# hauptton.

#### Example 6.7 Measure 18




MONOLOG FOR BASSOON by Isang Yun  
© Copyright by 1983/84 by Bote & Bock Musik – Und Bühnenverlag GMBH & Co.  
Reprinted by permission of Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.

Yun often employs a rising portamento figure to conclude the hauptton at the end of a phrase. This type of figure has its origins in the music performed at the Korean court ritual Rite to Confucius,<sup>145</sup> and is particularly suited to traditional Korean instruments because of their flexibility of pitch. While in Western music the term “portamento” often refers to a vocal or string technique, Yun writes this ornamentation for Western wind instruments as well. The rising portamento figure is utilized at various points throughout the *Monolog for bassoon*. For example, in measure 36 Yun directs the hauptton D to rise a quartertone at the last sixteenth note of the bar (see Example 6.2, page 45). Yun also employs this figure in one of the many attempts in section five to reach the highly anticipated, but never achieved, high E (see example 6.8). The D#

<sup>145</sup> Keith Howard, “Korean Tradition in Isang Yun’s Composition Style,” *Ssi-ol: Almanach der Internationalen Isang Yun Gesellschaft* (1998/99): 84.

hauptton in measure 75 rises a quartertone, while a simultaneous escalation of dynamics contributes to the growing intensity of the moment. Other examples of rising portamento occur in measures 7-8, 27, and 62.


**Example 6.8** Measures 74-75



MONOLOG FOR BASSOON by Isang Yun  
© Copyright by 1983/84 by Bote & Bock Musik – Und Bühnenverlag GMBH & Co.  
Reprinted by permission of Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.

Pitch bending is another ornament, which recalls the flexible nature of traditional Korean instruments such as the *piri*, *tai-keum* and various non-fretted string instruments. Yun invokes traditional Korean music by using pitch bending as a way of coloring long-held pitches to keep them ever changing. Examples of bending pitch to rise and fall by a quartertone occur in measures 48, 50 and 51 (see example 6.9).

**Example 6.9** Measures 46-51



MONOLOG FOR BASSOON by Isang Yun  
© Copyright by 1983/84 by Bote & Bock Musik – Und Bühnenverlag GMBH & Co.  
Reprinted by permission of Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.

Yun also uses pitch bending in combination with other ornaments to produce increased dramatic effects. In measure 73 (see example 6.10), the simultaneous use of pitch bending and tremolo, along with written crescendos at the top of the dynamic range, heightens the dramatic effect Yun portrays in section five.

### Example 6.10 Measure 73



MONOLOG FOR BASSOON by Isang Yun  
© Copyright by 1983/84 by Bote & Bock Musik – Und Bühnenverlag GMBH & Co.  
Reprinted by permission of Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.

Yun uses grace notes in many different ways throughout the *Monolog for bassoon*. In Korean music, the main tone is almost always preceded by some kind of ornament, often a grace note. For instance the hauptton F in bar 6 is preceded by a sixteenth note low E (see example 6.1, page 44). Though Yun gives the low E a specific duration, it still retains its grace note function. Grace notes also serve as interjections to break up a long held hauptton. A clear example occurs in measures 53 through 54 (see example 6.11). The high Eb is interrupted with various grace notes, which, along with fluctuations of dynamics, help to create motion. This use of the grace note allows the hauptton to remain prominent, while continuing to infuse energy and motion.

### Example 6.11 Measures 53-54



MONOLOG FOR BASSOON by Isang Yun  
© Copyright by 1983/84 by Bote & Bock Musik – Und Bühnenverlag GMBH & Co.  
Reprinted by permission of Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.

### Hauptton Analysis

A hauptton analysis of the *Monolog for bassoon* provides details pertinent to the long-term structure and development of the work. The first section of the *Monolog for bassoon* is an introduction and the last section is a conclusion. The interesting mirror appearance of haupttons (including the high C which ends the first section) creates an arch structure [C, F, A, C, A, F, C],

which surrounds the body of the work. The presence of this and other arch formations within the work is significant. As explained in Chapter Four, Yun used symmetrical forms and arch structures in his music to create balance, a central principle in Taoist philosophy.

The four sections in the middle of the work also relate to each other in terms of haupttons. Section two contains the greatest number of haupttons, and as the sections progress the number of haupttons used becomes fewer and the structure of the haupttons becomes more apparent. While section two contains eleven haupttons (comprised of six different pitches), section three contains five haupttons (comprised of four different pitches), section four uses four haupttons (comprised of four different pitches), and section five contains just three haupttons (comprised of two different pitches). Yun creates the feeling of movement from chaotic searching in section two gradually transitioning toward lucidity in section five. This concept is portrayed not just in the number of haupttons used but also in the clarity of hauptton presentation.

The inspiration for this progression of scattered searching to focused thought has several possible explanations. In his interview with Luise Rinser, Yun remarks that his works often contain a journey to what is, in the end, unattainable. He uses the example of his 1975/76 *Concerto for Cello and Orchestra*: “Remember the octave leaping toward the end. This leaping means desire and demand for freedom, purity, and absoluteness. In the orchestra, the oboe slides from G# to the A, and this A is taken over by the trumpets, which, in this high position, always have for me something divine and admonishing. There are two trumpets. They play this A alternately. The [solo] cello wants to reach it, but it does not succeed. It comes with its glissando a quartertone higher than G# but no higher. It gives up.”<sup>146</sup> The body of the *Monolog for bassoon*

---

<sup>146</sup> Byeon, “*Wounded Dragon*,” 33-34.

also presents a journey. As the bassoon travels through the different sections it weeds through different haupttons, but none are what it is looking for. In section five the bassoon comes very close to its goal. It reaches toward the desired destination, first with the hauptton C#, then to D#, bringing it only a half step away. It is an E that the bassoon desires to reach, recalling the very first note of the composition, the only note that has not been used as a hauptton in the entire work. The bassoon tries to achieve the E via stepwise motion, first striving to rise above a D#, then attempting to achieve it by means of the enharmonic spelling of Eb (measures 69-72). As in Yun's *Cello Concerto*, the bassoon reaches as high as a quartertone above D# in measure 75 (see example 6.8, page 52). As the struggle to achieve the E continues, the activity of the notes and dynamics escalate. Ultimately none of the attempts succeed and the goal of the E is never realized. The D# can no longer be maintained and drops back down to C#. This setback to C# is immediately followed by the final section of the work which portrays a somber, pensive, and defeated character.

Another inspiration for the *Monolog's* ever thinning and refining musical progression may originate in Yun's ties to Buddhism. The journey that Yun portrays in the middle sections of the *Monolog for bassoon* could be interpreted as a Buddhist's journey to clear the mind on the path to enlightenment. As a Buddhist attempts to reach enlightenment through inner reflection and meditation, one must try to quiet the mind so as not to be diverted by extraneous information, unhealthy impulses, and external distractions, thereby returning the mind to the original state of consciousness inherent at birth. The opening note of the piece, a low E, represents this ideal birth state. Yun portrays the chaotic and distracted mind in section two with its proliferation of haupttons, which are masked by almost constant ornamental figures. Meditative steps toward enlightenment are represented in sections three and four as the number

of haupttons lessens and their presentation becomes clearer. Finally, section five becomes most focused and apparent. The bassoon tries to reach an E, the same note that originates the work, as it attempts to bring the mind back to its ideal original state. The unattained goal of E indicates that even though the path to enlightenment has become clearer, the ambition is never achieved.

### **Yin and Yang in Yun's *Monolog for bassoon***

Isang Yun purposely created distinct differences within his works to symbolize and display the contrasting yet complementary forces of yin and yang. As Kim points out: "The process of interaction between yin and yang offers contradiction as well as harmony, and... is nothing but the external aspect of the same Tao. This concept of Taoist philosophy... became the basis of the ideals of many of Yun's compositions."<sup>147</sup> Yun never remains within one character for too long, always shifting to provide variety among various elements including dynamics, ornamentation, note activity and hauptton presentation. Often contrasting elements appear in direct succession to one another, while in other instances they may be presented farther apart. In the *Monolog for bassoon* Yun appears to do both, creating large-scale yin and yang dualism in the work on two different compositional levels.

The six sections that comprise the *Monolog for bassoon* are easily identified because of the contrasting elements that help to define them. While the first section is defined by elements of long sustained tones and ascending melodic lines sounding within low dynamic levels, the second section immediately contrasts this with extremely busy note activity and sudden and extreme dynamic changes. The third section then follows with a return to sustained tones in the tenor range of the instrument primarily sounding within soft and subtle dynamic changes. The

---

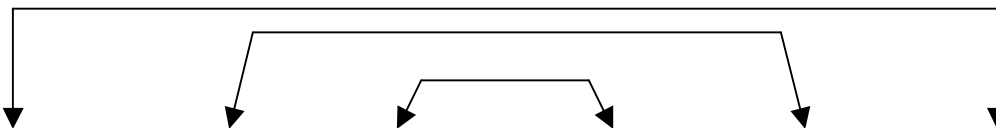
<sup>147</sup> Jeongmee Kim, "Musical Syncretism in Isang Yun's *Gasa*," in *Locating East Asia in Western Art Music*, ed. Yayoi Uno Everett and Frederick Lau (Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), 184



fourth section immediately changes to a focus on extreme upper register notes and dynamics of forte and above. While the fifth section contains the least immediate contrasts with the section preceding, the end of the section provides distinct contrasts with section six. The ending portion of section five employs fast moving notes, lots of ornamentation, extreme upper register and only loud dynamics, and is followed by an immediate drop to the low register, less note activity and soft dynamics in section six.

Another level of yin and yang analysis can be found in the *Monolog for bassoon* in which balance between contrasting forces spans symmetrically across the work. We have already been introduced to one example: the first and final sections of the work, analyzed as an introductory and conclusionary pair because of their mirror image hauptton presentation [C, F, A, C, A, F, C]. The yin and yang exist in the ascending quality of the opening and the descending quality in the ending. Contrast can also be seen in temperament. The first section is serene and with purpose, while the last section is brooding and unsettled. Working in toward the center are sections two and five. These sections contain a distinct disparity in the number of haupttons used and how they are presented. Section two uses six different pitches as haupttons, which are scattered and disguised among ornaments, while section five employs just two haupttons, which are presented clearly and deliberately. Sections three and four contrast each other as well, primarily in note range, register focus, and dynamic level. This large-scale symmetrical structure that Yun creates reinforces the Taoist concept of balance across the entire work. Table 6.5 illustrates this symmetrical analysis.

**Table 6.5** Symmetrical Yin and Yang Analysis



Section I mm. 1-14	Section II mm. 14-33	Section III mm. 34-45	Section IV mm. 46-57	Section V mm. 58-80	Section VI mm. 81-93
Ascending	Six hauptton pitches	Tenor Register	Extreme Upper Register	Two hauptton pitches	Descending
Serene, With Purpose	Haupttons scattered and disguised among ornaments	Primarily <i>ppp</i> dynamics, occasional <i>f</i>	Primarily <i>fff</i> dynamics, occasional <i>p</i>	Haupttons presented clearly and deliberately	Brooding, Unsettled

## Conclusion

The *Monolog for bassoon* well exemplifies Yun's unique compositional fusion of Eastern and Western elements. While this work, at first glance, appears to be a typical late twentieth-century avant-garde work for bassoon utilizing extended techniques within a non-tonal compositional context, Yun's compositional approach strives to uniquely convey traditional Korean philosophies, sound ideals, and instrumental techniques.

Understanding Yun's compositional method is key to the performer's comprehension of the work. With only a Western-minded analysis of the work, one may overlook crucial elements, such as main tone versus ornament, or treatment of the ornaments themselves, while making other analytical associations which Yun did not intend, such as relying on motivic development and harmonic motion to propel the music rather than melodic growth.

As with any musical genre, it is always appropriate to have a complete understanding of the composer's musical perspective. This understanding is no less true for music of the twentieth-century than it is for earlier periods, particularly as modern musical influences become more and more diverse and reach beyond the bounds of traditional Western classical music.

Composers are each uniquely inspired, and the more one can understand the composer's motivations and intentions, the more one can intellectually and emotionally connect with the composer and audience.

## REFERENCE LIST

- All Music Guide. "Exemplum in Memoriam Kwangju." <http://www.answers.com/topic/exemplum-in-memoriam-kwangju> (accessed January 4, 2009).
- Boosey & Hawkes. "Isang Yun." <http://www.boosey.com/cr/composer/Isang+Yun> (Accessed December 14, 2008).
- Boosey & Hawkes. "Monolog for bass clarinet." <http://www.boosey.com/cr/music/Isang-Yun-Monolog/1643> (accessed December 14, 2008).
- Boosey & Hawkes. "Monolog for bassoon." <http://www.boosey.com/cr/music/Isang-Yun-Monolog/4420> (accessed December 14, 2008).
- Byeon, Jiyeon, "*The Wounded Dragon: An Annotated Translation of Der verwundete Drache, the Biography of Composer Isang Yun, by Luise Rinser and Isang Yun.*" PhD diss., Kent State University, 2003.
- Duffie, Bruce. "Composer Isang Yun: A Conversation with Bruce Duffie." <http://www.bruceduffie.com/yun.html> (accessed April 2, 2008).
- Feliciano, Francisco. *Four Asian Contemporary Composers: The Influence of Tradition in Their Works*. Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1983.
- Howard, Keith, "Korean Tradition in Isang Yun's Composition Style." *Ssi-ol: Almanach der Internationalen Isang Yun Gesellschaft* (1998/99): 67-106.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Korean Music Volume 2: Creating Korean Music: Tradition, Innovation and the Discourse of Identity*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2006.
- Hur, Dae-Sik. "A Combination of Asian Language with Foundations of Western Music: An Analysis of Isang Yun's *Salomo* for Flute Solo or Alto Flute Solo." PhD diss., University of North Texas, 2005.
- International Isang Yun Society. "Isang Yun Biography." <http://www.yun-gesellschaft.de/e/nio.htm> (accessed April 2, 2008).
- Kim, Jeongmee. "Musical Syncretism in Isang Yun's *Gasa*." In *Locating East Asia in Western Art Music*, edited by Yayoi Uno Everett and Frederick Lau, 168-192. Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 2004.
- Kunz, Harold. "Isang Yun," *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/30747> (accessed December 14, 2008).

- Kongbobu, Munhwa. *Korean Music*. Edited by Kim Ki-su and Lee Kyung-mo. Seoul, Korea: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1959.
- Lee, Byong-Won, "The Ornaments in Traditional Korean Music: Structure, Function, and Semantics." *Ssi-ol: Almanach der Internationalen Isang Yun Gesellschaft* (1998/99): 59-66.
- McCredie, Andrew. "Isang Yun." In *Music of the Twentieth-Century Avant-Garde: A Biocritical Sourcebook*, edited by Larry Sitsky, 586-592. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2002.
- Mellon, Garrett. "Isang Yun." [http://humanitiescenter.nsysu.edu.tw/engvision/webplan\\_person34.php](http://humanitiescenter.nsysu.edu.tw/engvision/webplan_person34.php) (accessed December 14, 2008).
- Naxos. "Isang Yun Biography." [http://www.naxos.com/composerinfo/Isang\\_Yun/21621.htm](http://www.naxos.com/composerinfo/Isang_Yun/21621.htm) (accessed December 14, 2008).
- Sparrer, Wolfgang. Notes to *Isang Yun: Chamber Music*. Col Legno CD AU 31808.
- Yun, Isang. *Konzert für Klarinette und Orchester*. Berlin: Bote & Bock, 1981.
- Yun, Isang. *Monolog für Baß-Klarinette*. Berlin: Bote & Bock, 1983.
- Yun, Isang. *Monolog für Fagott*. Berlin: Bote & Bock, 1985.

## APPENDIX A: MUSICAL REALIZATION OF HAUPTTON ANALYSIS

Score

### Monolog Hauptton Analysis

Yun/Hauser

1

6

12

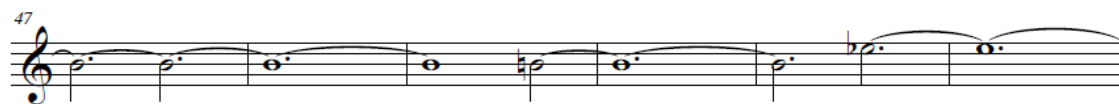
18

24

29

35

41



## APPENDIX B: LETTER OF PERMISSION



October 26, 2009

Laura Hauser  
2108B West Linden Ave.  
Nashville, TN 37212

RE: MONOLOG FOR BASSOON by Isang Yun

Dear Ms. Hauser:

We hereby grant permission for you to include excerpts from the above referenced work in your dissertation for Louisiana State University. As we assume you will not distribute your paper beyond that which is required for the degree no fee is payable.

We do require that you include the following copyright notice and credit line immediately following the music examples:

MONOLOG FOR BASSOON by Isang Yun  
© Copyright by 1983/84 by Bote & Bock Musik – Und Bühnenverlag GMBH & Co.  
Reprinted by permission of Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.

Permission is also granted for you to deposit one copy of your paper with University Microfilms, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan for single reproductions for scholarly use only. Should you wish to place your paper elsewhere you will have to contact us in advance as a royalty may be payable.

With kind regards,

BOOSEY & HAWKES, INC.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bindiya Patel".

Bindiya Patel  
Copyright Administrator

Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.  
35 East 21<sup>st</sup> Street, New York, NY 10010-6212  
Telephone (212) 358-5300 / Fax (212) 358-5305



## **VITA**

Bassoonist Laura Hauser has appeared internationally as a soloist and chamber musician. Her performing credits include appearances as soloist with the contemporary music group Musique 21, the Santo Domingo Music Festival, and the Eastman Wind Ensemble's 2000 tour of Japan. Additional orchestral credits include performing with the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra, Naples Philharmonic Orchestra, Palm Beach Opera Orchestra, Florida West Coast Symphony, Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra, and the Cleveland Orchestra at the Kent/Blossom Music Festival.

Ms. Hauser currently teaches for the Blair School of Music Pre-College at Vanderbilt University. She has previously been a faculty member at the University of Central Florida, Rollins College, and the University of North Florida.

Ms. Hauser is currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree at Louisiana State University. She holds a Master of Music degree from Michigan State University and Bachelor of Music degree from the Eastman School of Music. Her principal teachers include William Ludwig, Barrick Stees, John Hunt and Sanford Sharoff.